

# アニメ ANIME UK

MAGAZINE



**KNIGHT SABER  
STORIES**

**MASAMUNE SHIROW X3**

**SCHOOLGIRL CRUSH!**

**PROJECT A-KO**

**3**

£3.50 / \$5.75  
(US)





## SECOND NATURE

When it comes to picturing the world around you, it's second nature to reach for REALA.

Lifelike reproduction. Breathtaking detail.  
And colour as nature intended.

REALA. Images so real, you can almost touch...



AVAILABLE IN ISO 100, 35mm and 120 FORMATS.

FUJI PHOTO FILM (UK) LIMITED, FUJI FILM HOUSE, 125 FINCHLEY ROAD, LONDON, NW3 6JH. TEL: 071 586 5900.



# ANIME UK

MAGAZINE

**FRONT COVER** – Project A-Ko – by Wil Overton.  
**BACK COVER** – Aura Battler Dunbine – by Steve Kyte.

## VOL.1 NO.3

### EDITOR

**Helen McCarthy**

is very, very cross. Two of our writers are reporting on ANIME EXPO in San Jose and HAMACON, the Japanese National SF Convention in Yokohama, but she had to stay at home and edit the magazine. She says if Britain has a constitution, this would definitely constitute unconstitutional activity. Editing their reports for the next issue and seeing all the goodies they brought back may make her even crosser, so....

### DESIGNER

**Wil Overton**

is hiding under his drawing board and refuses to come out until someone finds him a Char Aznable poster to calm his editor down. His research for the PROJECT A-KO article in this issue has made him determined never, ever to go near an all-girls school again!

### STAFF ARTIST

**Steve Kyte**

has taken a break from THUNDERBIRDS to draw some non-green things for this issue. He's trying to avoid Wolverhampton, where some of his work on you-know-what is on display until the end of this month.

### PUBLISHER

**Peter Goll**

knows the way to San Jose, but we wouldn't let him out of the office to go there. He thinks this is very unfair as he could worry just as creatively on the beaches of California as in London.

Thanks on this issue to:

Alphaset again, for typesetting.  
Sue Shadbolt, for taking the ol' pictureoonies.

Dan at Diamond Distribution for keeping a truly British stiff upper lip.

and a large slapping to:

Clive, who mucked up so many covers on issue 2. May you be seduced by the spider girl from Supernatural Beast City!

All writing and artwork remains the copyright of the author and/or artist and may not be reproduced in any form without permission. The Editor will forward any such requests for reproduction to the appropriate person.

All characters remain the copyright of their respective studios and creators.

All views and opinions expressed herein are the personal views and opinions of the writer. Accuracy of information contained herein is always striven for but can never be absolutely guaranteed!

Editorial address (Letters etc.)  
c/o Helen McCarthy  
147 Francis Road, Leyton, London,  
E10 6NT England

All other enquiries to:  
Wil Overton  
70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF  
England

Printed by Script Litho,  
Hertfordshire, England

### KONNICHIWA!

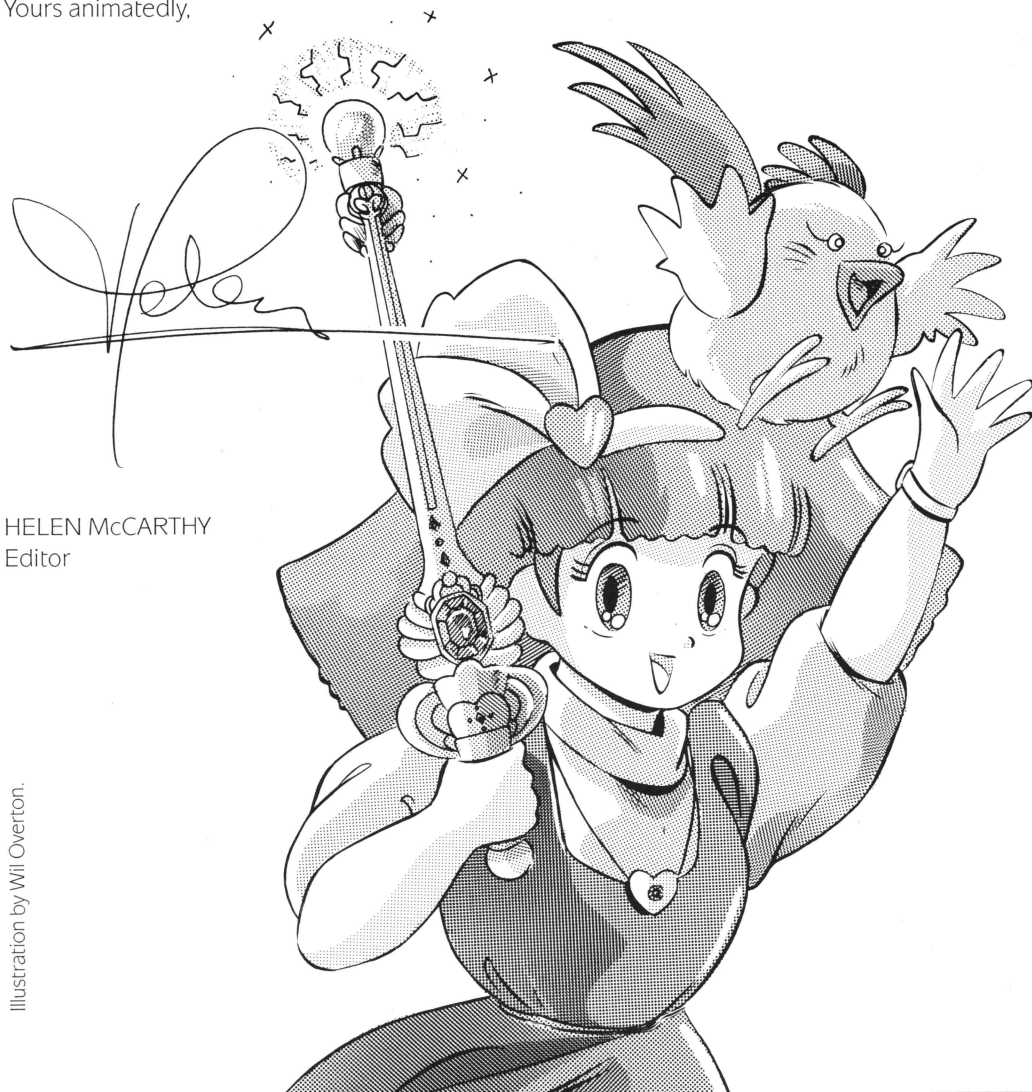
Welcome to issue 3 of **ANIME UK MAGAZINE**, which I'm delighted to say is getting bigger and better. This time around we introduce three new writers – John T. Carr tells us about Otomo's surprising follow-up to AKIRA, Peter Evans gives a gaikokujin's-eye view of what it's like to live in Tokyo (and find out you're NOT dreaming!) and Roger 'RAD' Duarte tells the stories of Bubblegum Crisis. We also have a penetrating look at the concept of artificial life from Peter J. Evans, and information on roleplaying and manga from Jim Swallow.

This issue focuses on two new releases from ISLAND WORLD – DOMINION and PROJECT A-KO. As we go to press, very little information is available on any changes made for the U.K. market to these two fan favourites, but we've got all the news that's around, plus background on the Japanese originals. One thing we do know is that the music score for DOMINION has been replaced – I look forward to hearing your views on this. How important is the soundtrack of a film or video? Let me know what you think.

Also this issue we have a little gift from us to you – your very own Knight Sabers to cut out and dress! And there's a competition too, so look out for it.

For the future we've got lots more good things planned, and with your support we'll make them happen. For now, sit back and enjoy all the latest news, reviews and information on anime – the most fun you can have with a V.C.R.

Yours animatedly,



HELEN MCCARTHY  
Editor

Illustration by Wil Overton.



3

## NEWSLINE

Anime gets computerised at Hamacon with Memories of Green.

5

## PROJECT A-KO By Helen McCarthy

School dinners have come under much scorn over the years, but if you're ever offered a meal at the Graviton Institute for Girls by an overcute blonde called C-Ko, just refuse!

11

## ANIME A-Z By Steve Kyte

Part two – 'B'.

12

## LIVE FROM HELL CITY By Peter Evans

A day trip to Animate brings the peril of Japanese trains and an overdose of cuteness to our man in Japan.

14

## BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

By Roger 'RAD' Duarte

Stories of Knight Sabers 2032-2033

18

## ROUJIN Z By John T. Carr

An anime about old age might not seem very exciting, but what if it's by the creator of Akira?

20

## Masamune Shirow's ORION

By Helen McCarthy & Wil Overton

A change of style from the man responsible for Appleseed and Dominion in this sneak look at Dark Horse's translation of Shirow's latest creation.

22

## THE ROLEPLAYING CONNECTION –

Part 2 By Jim Swallow

How to go about adapting your favourite anime to gaming.

24

## IT'S ALIVE! By Peter J. Evans

Or is it? Just how close to living can an artificial person get?

28

## DOMINION By Helen McCarthy

More from Masamune Shirow in which he proves that not only can he give us cute girls, but cute tanks as well!

32

## BLACK MAGIC – Manga into anime

By Jim Swallow

The (considerable) differences between Shirow's Black Magic manga and its Mario M66 counterpart.

34

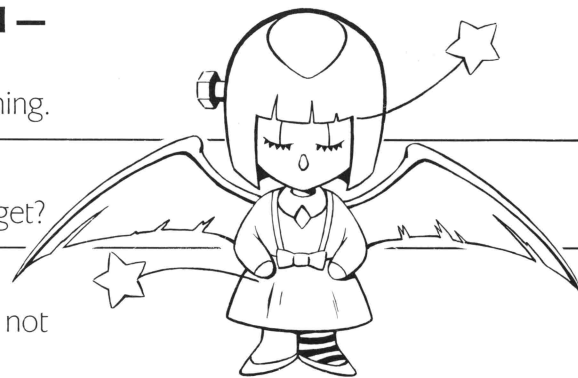
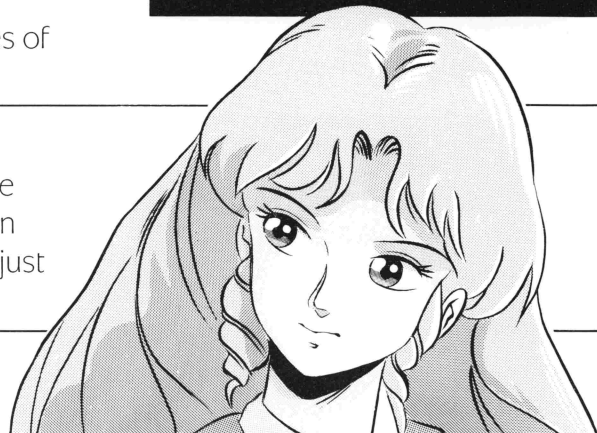
## ANIMAIL

Comments from you out there.

37

## OUTZONE

More for the hungry anime fan and what's coming up next time.







# NEWSLINE

## HAMACON LATEST

Those of you who find yourselves making an unexpected trip to Japan this month should try to make it coincide with the weekend of 21st-23rd August, when a short run on the NEX (Narita-Tokyo-Yokohama EXpress) will take you to HAMACON, the 31st Japan Science Fiction Convention. Covering both home-grown sf and the Western product, HAMACON has many attractions, chief of which for anime fans are the presence of Cartoonist Guest of Honour GO NAGAI, creator of MAZINGER Z, DEVILMAN, CUTIE HONEY and scores of other popular manga and anime characters, and the opening animation.

This is something of a tradition at the Japan Science Fiction Convention; the films made for DAICON 3 (1981) and DAICON 4 (1983) are eagerly sought after by fans all over the world, and also launched their creators into the professional world as GAINAX, who went on to make GUNBUSTER and SECRET OF BLUE WATER.

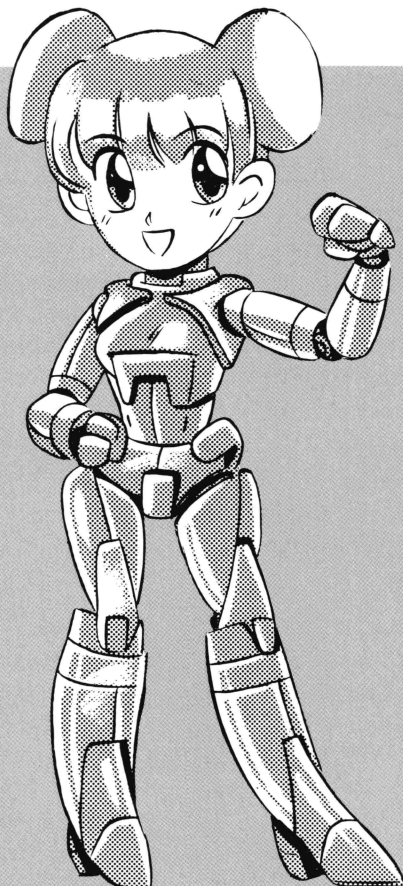
This year's team may well follow the same route if MEMORIES OF GREEN (named after the Vangelis track from BLADE RUNNER) is a success. The main chara is a girl cyborg who fights off villainous mechs. Nothing unusual there – but the film itself is a first because it's been made entirely in computer graphics. Even AKIRA used CG only sparingly, and a full length CG film has never been attempted before now. If you would like more information, here's where to go:

HAMACON Committee,  
Overseas Department,  
37-1-607 IMAIKAMI-MACHI,  
NAKAHARA-KU, KAWASAKI City,  
211 KANAGAWA, JAPAN  
Tel 010 81 44 733 4291  
Fax 010 81 44 733 3603

**PIRIKA** – from Hamacon's new all-computer graphics generated, opening animation – Memories of Green. ▶

## LATEST FROM ISLAND WORLD

Island World Communications' MANGA VIDEO label released a dubbed version of DOMINION last month and will release PROJECT A-KO this month. Both dubs are based on the original translations (by Neal Nadelman and Matt Thorn respectively) made for the US MANGA CORPS subtitled releases. In an interesting variation on the "coals to Newcastle" theme, USMC owners Central Park Media will be making the MANGA VIDEO dubbed versions of DOMINION and PROJECT A-KO available on the NTSC sellthrough market in the USA, alongside the subtitled versions which have done so well for them. This should expand their market considerably and is the reason for using American voice actors rather than British ones – apparently our Transatlantic cousins are less likely to buy anime dubbed in British accents than their own! Other collaborations between Island World and CPM are possible, but nothing definite is planned at present.



Laurence Guinness of Island World says that the feedback the company is receiving from fans is very welcome. They are looking forward to releasing as many different kinds of anime as possible and have lots of ideas. The time it takes to negotiate rights, organise translation and dubbing and release a tape onto the market, means that this can't always be an instantaneous process, but Laurence stresses that the company is pleased with sales on their early releases (AKIRA and FIST OF THE NORTH STAR) and is committed to anime.

## U.S. MANGA CORPS ON THE MOVE!

Yes, Central Park Media/USMC have moved offices. The new address is 250 West 57th Street, Suite 831, New York, NY 10107, U.S.A.

## ANIME UK EXPANSION

You might just have noticed that this issue of Anime UK Magazine contains not only a great "dress your own Knight Sabers" giveaway but also a mail order list of anime goods for sale. Yes, as of this issue we are now able to offer some of the great goodies that so far have only been available in Japan or in a few specialist shops that charge ridiculous prices. At the present time this is very much an experiment for us, so the items on this first list are in extremely limited supply. If it's a success, we'll get more stock in and be able to offer a wider variety of goods. As space on the list is limited we're only able to give a very brief description of each item, but if you do need to know more then please ring and we'll endeavour to tell you more about it. If there's anything that you want in particular that's not on the list then again, contact us and we'll try and get it for you. We've tried to keep prices as low as possible but to do this we need to sell what we get in, for this first list we've ordered what we'd like to buy but we need to know what you want in order to keep it going. You can either write to: 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF or call on: 071-637 2587 between 10am and 5pm Monday to Friday.





# NEWSLINE

## CARDIFF ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Jon Weeks attended the International Animation Festival in Cardiff in March, and reports that though the Japanese content was 700% up on last year it was still very much the "acceptable face of anime", concentrating on children's film and "art" rather than the wider more commercial shores of television and the OAV. The organisers chickened out or couldn't get a certificate for LEGEND OF THE OVERFIEND, the American version of WANDERING KID, which had been widely advertised; the substitute for

alien sex attacks was the rather more refined, and ravishingly beautiful, THE SENSUALIST by Yukio Abe. Other screenings were LAPUTA, MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO, TOMBSTONE OF THE FIREFLIES, FIST OF THE NORTH STAR and two "retrospective" programmes of short films from the 20's to the present day.

For details of next year's festival write to:

The International Animation Festival  
69 Wells Street  
London W1P 3RB

## BUBBLEGUM CRISIS BEST DRESS COMPETITION

Want to see your favourite Knight Saber in the outfit of your dreams? Then design an outfit to fit the doll of your choice and send the design to us! You don't have to produce a great drawing – just a clear design in full colour. And the prize? One of our artists will paint your favourite, wearing your outfit for our back cover and you get the original artwork, framed to keep!

You have until September 30th to enter, so send those designs to:

ANIME UK MAGAZINE  
70 Mortimer Street  
London W1N 7DF  
United Kingdom

NB: We cannot return any designs – so please keep a copy for yourself!

## CORRECTION FILE

A few mistakes crept into the last issue, but we're big enough to admit it! Seriously though, although we do try very hard to check all the information before we go to press we're not perfect so if you do spot any errors that manage to get by us, please tell us! Bubblegum Crisis seemed to be the culprit in issue 2, the timings for the 8 episodes should have been as follows:

Part 1 (which is now known as 'TINSEL CITY'): – 55 mins  
Part 2 BORN TO KILL – 30 mins  
Part 3 BLOW UP – 28 mins  
Part 4 REVENGE ROAD – 40 mins  
Part 5 MOONLIGHT RAMBLER – 45 mins  
Part 6 RED EYES – 51 mins  
Part 7 DOUBLE VISION – 50 mins  
Part 8 SCOOP CHASE – 53 mins  
Crisis comes in for it again, as on page 28 the picture which accompanies Brian J. Mason isn't in fact him! It's J. J. Gibson from Part 4: Revenge Road. For this horrendous error, Art Editor, Wil Overton has been forced to wear a Minky Momo outfit and watch continuous episodes of Thundercats until he cries. Brian J. Mason should look like this:



And finally, the pictures for Bubblegum Crisis on pages 24-25 should have been credited to Simon Barnes.

## Preview

### GREEN LEGEND: RAN

Three parts, total running time approximately 135 minutes. Released simultaneously on both VT (video tape) and LD (laserdisk), part 1 on 25th July, followed by parts 2 and 3 on the 25th August and September. Ran means confusion in case you are wondering. This is the story of Ran and Aria and their quest for...well, we shall see. All publicity makes this look like a cross between NADIA and MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD.

		PREVIOUS CREDITS
<b>Producer</b>	Satoshi Saga	Five Star Stories
<b>Director</b>	Kengo Inagaki	Goku 1+2
	Junichi Watanabe	Ariel
<b>Character Design</b>	Yoshimitsu Ohashi	Secret of Blue Water
<b>Mechanic</b>	Hisashi Etsura	Ariel 3+4
<b>Production</b>	Shuuichi Shimamura	Ariel 3+4
<b>Art Supervisor</b>	Ken Arai	
<b>Music</b>	Yoichiro Yoshikawa	Robinson no niwa

### BASTARD!

Six Parts, approximately 3 hours. First part released on Video 25th August. Based on the manga of the same name. If it's faithful to the original, then it will be a bloodthirsty sword-waving-lunatics special. The two main characters are Dark Shiyunaider (Schneider perhaps?) and Tia Not Yuko as an industrial strength magic user and cutie respectively. Note the full strength production team from AIC.

		PREVIOUS CREDITS
<b>Producer</b>	Katsuhito Akiyama	GallForce, Bubblegum Crisis
<b>Scenario</b>	Hiroshi Yamaguchi	Mellowlink, Hepoi
<b>Character Design</b>	Hiroyuki Kitazume	AD Police, Gaiarth
<b>Monster Design</b>	Masanori Nishii	Orgun, Iczar 3, Silent Möbius
<b>Conte</b>	Tatsuya Okamoto	Hakkenden
	Takeshi Aoki	Hakkenden, Orgun, Holmes
	Hiruyuki Ochi	Angel Cop
	Masami Ohari	Orgun, Bubblegum Crisis
	Yasuki Ide	Burn Up, Bubblegum Crisis
<b>Art</b>	Naoyuki Onda	Nineteen, Sol Bianca
	Masahiro Tanaka	Bubblegum Crisis, GallForce
	Atsushi Okuda	Hakkenden, GallForce
	Seiji Sorida	GallForce, Orgun
	Keishi Hashimoto	Silent Möbius, Orgun, Madara
<b>Visual Design</b>	Shigimi Ikeda	BGC 6, Sol Bianca, Gundam F91
<b>Music</b>	Kohei Tanaka	



High jinks in high school as schoolgirl crushes lead to serious structural problems for Graviton City in:



# PROJECT A-KO

By Helen McCarthy





# GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN

The girls school story is a long-established fictional tradition in Britain. From the end of the First World War, when the fashion for sending daughters (previously kept at home) away to be educated began, until the late sixties, the genre enjoyed enormous popularity, both in hardback novels and as strip stories in girls papers. Many an elegant fortysomething lady executive cherishes her girlhood collection of Chalet School or Mallory Tower books, and remembers with great fondness the exploits of the Silent Three or the Four Marys, heroines of the lead stories in popular weeklies like SCHOOL FRIEND. Since the end of the sixties, however the genre has been in decline as mixed education has become the norm, and no-one had produced a girls school story for the 21st century until Katsuhiko Nishijima and Kasumi Shirasaka created the Graviton Institute for Girls as the setting for PROJECT A-KO.

This insane and entirely Japanese comedy has all the elements of the greatest British school stories – the spunky, big-hearted heroine, the fluffy little school birdbrain, the school swot, the gang of creeps sucking up to the richest girl in school, the crushes on schoolmates and teachers, the spy lurking outside the gates and the dastardly alien plots...truly alien in this case, hatched by the drunken, psychotic commander of a space superfortress. This is, after all, a girls school story for the 21st century!

PROJECT A-KO was made for cinema release by A.P.P.P. Co. Ltd. and Soeishinsha Co. Ltd. in 1986. Its success was such that three further instalments appeared as OAV's (original animation videos, made for the sellthrough and rental market) after the release of the film on video. These in turn led to two further OAV's, A-KO THE VS: Blue Side and Grey Side, taking the story in a different direction and alternating the relationships between the leading characters. The A-KO series was partially or fully subtitled by a number of fan groups before the first and seminal film PROJECT A-KO, was professionally subtitled (from a sympathetic translation by Matt Thorn) for sellthrough release by U.S. MANGA CORPS in the USA in 1991. The same translation has been used as the basis of a dubbing script by Island World Communications, who release the English dub on their Manga Video label on August 6th 1992.



## THE MUSIC

The score for PROJECT A-KO is unusual in that it was written, produced and performed by American musicians in Hollywood. Film and TV veterans Joey Carbone (musical director of STAR SEARCH) and Richie Zito (who supplied the music for FLASHDANCE) were given the task of composing and producing the original soundtrack, which was recorded and mixed by George Doering in his studio in Hollywood. Messrs Carbone and Zito between them play synthesiser, piano, guitars, percussion and drums, aided by arranger Arthur Barrow on synths, bass and drums: engineer Doering lends a hand on guitar. The three major vocal tracks are all in English; "DANCE AWAY" is sung by Annie Livingstone, "IN YOUR EYES" by Samantha Newark, and "FOLLOW YOUR DREAM" by Valerie Stevenson, with backing vocals by Andrea Robertson and Laura Creamer.

The original soundtrack was released on CD by Polystar No. H35R-20004. If no Western release follows then the marketing guys are missing a great opportunity. This is a bright, poppy upbeat score full of pacy, foot-tapping tunes, "Follow Your Dream" being especially hummable. Despite their lack of anime background Carbone and Zito have produced a score which fits in perfectly with PROJECT A-KO's atmosphere of total mayhem, and it's performed with verve and commitment by all concerned. Let's hope there'll be a UK release soon!

## BACKGROUND

PROJECT A-KO is the plot by rich kid B-Ko Daitokuji to discredit and humiliate heroine A-Ko and take her place as bubble-brained but cute C-Ko's best friend. Sixteen years before the first story opens Graviton City was devastated when an empty alien craft of gigantic proportions crash-landed right on top of it. Fans of the Japanese TV series SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS or its American offspring ROBOTECH will recognise this identical premise as the first of many references to popular anime and other cultural icons which litter the whole PROJECT A-KO series.

The crash caused an immense crater, which filled with water and is now a sparkling blue bay. The city's business sector has been rebuilt on an island around the hulk of the ship itself, which in the first film is a military command centre, though its upper decks are opened as the hottest nightspot in town in CINDERELLA RHAPSODY. A couple of years after the disaster, A-Ko, B-Ko and C-Ko met for the first time at Cradle Kindergarten. This was the scene of B-Ko's first challenge for C-Ko's affections; she was at that time a dumpy, plain toddler with spots and was foiled when A-Ko and C-Ko left the area. The trio's paths do not cross again until A-Ko and C-Ko arrive for their first day in class at the Graviton Institute for Girls. B-Ko has long outgrown her spots but is still the same bossy, spoilt brat at heart. A-Ko is stronger than ever. And C-Ko – well,

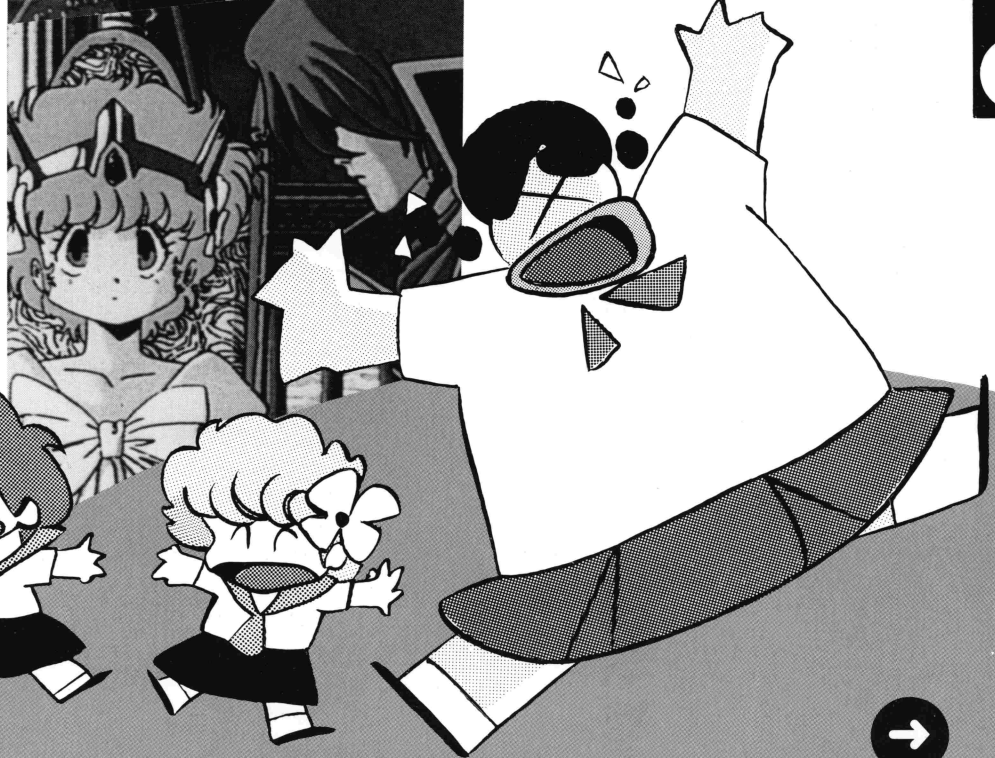


C-Ko is just sooooo CUTE...

Much of the action takes place at the school gates, where B-Ko is constantly challenging A-Ko to fights of ever-escalating absurdity and thus destroying large portions of the fabric of the school and making her late for class. A-Ko's efforts to be on time for class form a running gag throughout the film. While B-Ko and her gang are spying on A-Ko to try and work out how to defeat her, alien agent Spy-D reports back to Captain Napolipolita that he thinks the lost princess has been found – yes, it's C-Ko. She is abducted by the aliens and A-Ko and B-Ko call a temporary truce, joining forces to get her back. Once she's safely back to Earth they can carry on fighting to be her best friend, but before that a titanic battle aboard the alien ship makes for an action-packed climax for the film.

By now, any illusions cherished by those in the audience who have never experienced single sex education, about the quiet gentility of girl's schools and the sweet nature of the young Oriental female have been shattered forever. Welcome to the real world, where schoolgirls are vicious, calculating and utterly insane little creatures whose sailor suits and wide smiles can hide the dastardly brain of Fu Man Chu, the fighting skills of Bruce Lee and the firepower of an entire planetary system. As we go to press, the MANGA VIDEO release of PROJECT A-KO is still being dubbed and no details of voice artists or script are available. However Island World Communications say that the script will stick closely to Matt Thorn's sensitive translation, so the result should be a lot of fun. The music score will be unchanged.

PROJECT A-KO and its successors have been favourites both in Japan and on the Western fan circuit since they first appeared; now the British mass market is about to find out why. Schoolgirls will never look the same again....







A-KO

### A-KO MAGAMI

Aged 17, red haired with vital statistics of 34-24-33, A-Ko weighs 103lbs and stands 5'5" tall. She is the strongest girl in the world. Rather disorganised and untidy, with a tendency to lateness, she is very good natured and protective of her friends and has great courage. She is usually dressed in a fairly standard Japanese school uniform of pleated skirt and sailor blouse. She always wears two armlets, which may help to control her strength. The glimpse of her parents at the end of the film tells us where she gets her talents; they are Clark Kent (Superman) and Diana Prince (Wonder Woman).

### B-KO DAITOKUJI

Aged 17, violet haired and glamorous, her "school uniform" is an elegant European-style designer jacket and skirt. She is the headstrong and selfcentred only daughter of a millionaire industrialist and lives in a palatial mansion. An engineering genius, she can knock up a mobile suit overnight and creates a power-enhancing outfit for herself which not only enables her to slug it out with A-Ko but also reveals a lot more than the school uniform, in the best tradition of anime heroines. She's an elegant 5'7" tall and her 34½-23-35 frame weighs just 124lbs.



B-KO



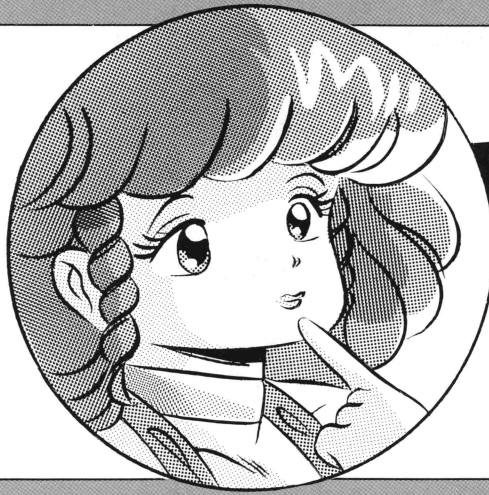
C-KO

### C-KO KOTOBUKI

Aged 17 going on 3, terminally soft cute blonde. She is completely irresistible to everyone (the first thought of anyone who meets her is "Isn't she cute?") despite several major character flaws such as selfishness, cowardice, a tendency to bawl her eyes out if she doesn't get her own way and insistence on preparing utterly revolting food for her friends. She dresses in sailor blouse and hotpants, always has a flower in her hair, and invariably refers to herself in the third person, as "C-Ko-chan". She can reasonably be assumed to have no brain whatsoever. C-Ko is a dinky 5'2" tall and weighs just 94 lbs. Her vital statistics are 29-26-30.



The teacher of the girl's class at the Institute, and no slouch in the cuteness stakes herself, she is a pretty girl in her mid-twenties who teaches English via nonsense poetry, rides a pink scooter, and in a later episode moonlights as a part-time super-heroine. Much confusion is caused in CINDERELLA RHAPSODY when B-Ko's father attempts to arrange a marriage between her and the man on whom both A-Ko and B-Ko have a titanic crush!



**AYUMI-SENSEI**

**CAPT NAPOLIPOLITA**



Insane alcoholic commander of an alien superfortress who comes to Graviton City looking for the princess his race lost sixteen years ago, and ends up staying. He's really a cross-dressed female but we first see him as a dipsomaniac clone of the 70's anime idol Captain Harlock! His voice may be familiar to fans of the GUNDAM series, since Japanese voice artist SHUICHI IKEDA also provided the velvet tones of Neo-Jion leader Char Aznable in that epic.

The captain's sidekick, another alien female, is a classic, lurking-heavy-type agent in trenchcoat and shades. As the film progresses D also wears an ever-increasing assortment of bandages, slings and surgical appliances, since he always comes off worse in encounters with A-Ko and C-Ko.



**SPY-D**

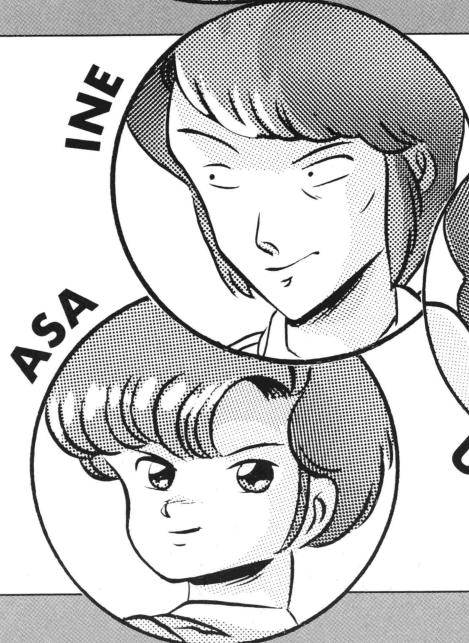
Four typically nasty, unattractive or stupid schoolgirl creeps of the type who always hang around the richest kids in the class.

ASA is the bossy one with the brown ponytail.

INE is skinny, with short brown hair, and usually does any spying that's required by B-Ko.

UME is short, fat and bespectacled and the last person you'd expect to be selected as a mobile suit pilot.

MARI is the Kenshiro of the girls school world, an enormous, deepvoiced, muscular figure whose lantern jaw is incongruously framed by short pigtails.



**ASA**

**INE**

**UME**



**MARI**

**B-KO'S GANG**

# PROJECT A-KO – PRODUCTION CREDITS

<b>Original Story</b>	Katsuhiko Nishijima Kasumi Shirasaka
<b>Screenplay</b>	Yuji Moriyama Katsuhiko Nishijima Tomoko Kawasaki
<b>Art Director</b>	Shinji Kimma Kobayashi Productions
<b>Executive Producers</b>	Naotaka Yoshida Soeishinsa Co. Ltd. A.P.P.P. Co. Ltd. Yuji Moriyama
<b>Chara Designer/Animation Director</b> <b>Executive Producers of</b> <b>English Language Version</b>	John O'Donnell and Laurence Guinness
<b>Translator</b>	Matt Thorn



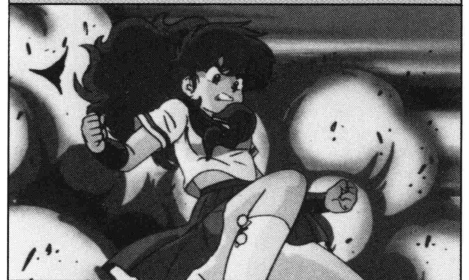
The title is a homage to the Jackie Chan movie PROJECT A, which also features lots of violence and people in sailor suits.

The three girls initials refer to their attributes: A-Ko is Athletic, B-Ko is Brainy and C-Ko is (of course) Cute. B-Ko's surname, DAITOKUJI is also the name of a great Rinzaï Zen Buddhist temple in Kyoto.

Colonel Sanders appears in the movie A-Ko and C-Ko see when they skip school.

## PROJECT A-KO: THE WHOLE SAGA

- 1986: Part 1: PROJECT A-KO – Film + OAV
- 1987: Part 2: A PLOT OF FINANCIAL GROUP, DAITOKUJI – OAV
- 1988: Part 3: CINDERELLA RHAPSODY – OAV
- 1989: Part 4: A-KO THE FINAL – OAV
- 1990: A-KO THE VS/BATTLE 1: GREY SIDE – OAV
- 1990: A-KO THE VS/BATTLE 2: BLUE SIDE – OAV



Cameo appearances by other anime characters in crowd scenes occur throughout the A-Ko series; watch for Lum and Ataru from URUSEI YATSURA almost being mown down by A-Ko as she charges along a corridor.

There's even a vampire connection: C-Ko's voice artist MICHIE TOMIZAWA also voices Doris in the classic horror anime VAMPIRE HUNTER D.

CUTE (Kawaii) is a cult in Japan, especially amongst schoolgirls where "cuteness" sells hundreds of millions of yen worth of fluffy toys, baby animals and pink hair ornaments every year. PROJECT A-KO is therefore not just a very funny film and a comment on the Japanese education system, but also a satire on social trends amongst teenage girls – but don't let that put you off, it's STILL a very funny film.

完





# AZ

TO

# OF ANIME

by Steve Kyte

**B**

**BANDAI** — Surely the biggest company involved in anime in Japan? Best known for its model kit/toy empire, it has expanded in many directions, with its own publishing arm and video disc/tape label (EMOTION). Also produces confectionery and giftware (would you believe GUNDAM shampoo?) and has been involved in the production of anime features.

**BATTLE FOR MOON STATION DALLOS** — US English-dubbed version of the film DALLOS (surprise!) released on home video.

**B-CLUB** — Bandai's own 'garage kit' model line, also the title of their glossy modelling magazine and their Tokyo shop.

**BGM/B.G.M.** — acronym for Back Ground Music, catchy Japanese term for anime soundtrack music.

**BOOKS NIPPON/NIPPAN** — Japanese bookstore chain, in the US it's BOOKS NIPPAN and over here BOOKS NIPPON (right next door to St. Paul's Cathedral in London). The US co. runs an anime fan club, members get discounts in anime/manga merchandise bought from them.

**BUNKO** — pronounced BOONG-KO, Japanese name for pocket-sized books.

▼ **KENSHIRO** — The Fist of the North Star.



**BURONSON** — real name YOSHIYUKI OKAMURA (aka SHO SHIMURA), his pen name comes from his favourite actor, Charles Bronson. Writer of manga series HOKUTO NO KEN (US version: FIST OF THE NORTH STAR) which gave rise to 2 highly successful anime series.

## **BATTLE OF THE PLANETS** —

infamous 'hack job' of the series SCIENCE NINJA TEAM GATCHAMAN performed by SANDY FRANK PRODUCTIONS in the late 70's to render it 'suitable' for Western consumption. Original series ran from 72 to 74 on Japanese tv (105 episodes), followed by 2 other series, GATCHAMAN II (52 episodes) in 78 and GATCHAMAN FIGHTER (48 episodes) in 79. For US version 85 of first series episodes were used, heavily cut. To replace the missing footage Frank produced new animation in the US, featuring the heroes' 'rec room' and introducing two new characters — robot 7-Zark-7 and his robot dog 1-Rover-1. Yuck!!! Probably the worst example of the West's treatment of anime.



▼ **Battle of the Planet's** Jason, Gatchaman's Joe & G-Force's Dirk Daring!

Well, everyone keeps asking – “What’s it like in Japan?” In many forms, from nice sensible questions like “is it expensive” to a typical “is it true that they (nani-nani-nani) in (dokoka) Shinjuku?” In a word the answer is “MU”. So let’s start from the beginning. Item one, Japan is full of Japanese. This is logical since if it was full of Martians it would be Mars. Item two, there are an awful lot of them. This would account for the trains, an ideal starting point. There are several categories of train, and I don’t mean steam, diesel or electric.

**The Empty Train** – On this train, the floor is visible in many places, you may even find a seat, if one of the deities allows you. These are rare, and demand travelling in peculiar directions at odd times. Needless to say, with the reduced population the drool quotient (DQ) is low. Maybe less than 50 people per car.

**The Normal Train** – On this train, scattered patches of floor are visible, specifically around where you stand. It is a good idea to know which side your stop exits on, and drift to that side. At a guess, somewhere around 100-150. But beware, or it could turn into:

**The Crowded Train** – For no reason, the next station boasts a seething horde whose mission is to GET ON THIS TRAIN! And they will. 200 people decide that they are coming in through four doors, war is merely playful banter to this lot. The floor is invisible, and it is possible to tell what underwear the women pressed against you are wearing. There is nothing worse! Oh no?

**The Full Train** – This is an awesome prospect. If the floor disappeared, nobody would notice, nobody would fall. This is clearly a punishment for which there is no crime. Worse still, when the train stops at your station, the entire Mongol Horde is between you and the exit. And they have no intention of moving (they can’t). They are so full that if you end up next to a woman then



you can not only discern her underwear, but you can feel what colour it is. I pity the short people on these trains. There are a few exceptions to this generic classification system, such as:

**The Schoolgirl Special** – They’re noisy, they’re cute, there are 200+ in your car. Avoid this train if you have a weak heart. For some reason, schoolboys don’t seem to travel in such large or clearly defined hunting packs. Hundreds of sailor-girl uniforms surround you, each with their little logo that allows other members of other wolf-packs to decide they are in the wrong place. Such noble establishments as “The school of the sacred knot;” “The school of the blue wobble and short skirt” and “Video Girl School of infinite chiizu-kekki” can be distinguished by the trained observer. I’m thinking of writing a book on schoolithology, the study of schoolgirls/boys.

**The Late-Night Drunk-Mobile** – You don’t want to know. Actually, it would be funny to watch, say from the other side of a television screen. When this train stops, a lot of the passengers don’t.

# LIVE FROM hell city

BY PETER EVANS

**The Super-Hyper-Death-Express** – They’re full, they’re fast. They make three stops on the way to Hell City. The only difference between this and a tin of sardines is that the sardines were drafted. These people are volunteers. Actually, I think the sardines have more space as well. If you are unfortunate enough to miss your stop on the way out, you will hear an announcement which, translated means: “Welcome to the Hyper-Light Express to Barnard’s Star. We will shortly be achieving escape velocity, so now is a good time to shut any open windows. Thank you for travelling with Odakyu Interstellar.”

Well, what next? Presumably you want to go somewhere. Let us describe a typical Saturday expedition into the wilds of Tokyo, seen through the eyes of our valiant (foolhardy) explorer Jim. And now, Jim, your mission should you decide to accept it, is to boldly shop for a chisai-Totoro. This tape will..... What did the weather say? 10% chance of rain? This actually means that 10% of all rain will fall today. A 70% chance of rain is a scary prospect of biblical proportions, especially as this is the rainy season. Maybe I’ll get lucky and it will miss the drop zone, the Pacific could probably do with a top-up. Take umbrella – is it that or a wet-suit – and other essential goodies such as wand of protection from demons, rather large sword, train pass and tentacle-proof lurking coat. Our hero now leaves, heading for Tokyo proper. On arrival at the station, 15 minutes down the hill, he shows his pass to the gate-demon and catches a train one stop along the line to Noborito (famous for being entirely ordinary). Hence the song: “Noborito, Noborito. On no it’s Noborito,” as opposed to places of interest, like Ohashi. “In Ohashi did Kubla Kan a spanking Panchinko hall decree. Where Yuk the rancid sewer ran, through tunnels so poisonous to man...” Since he knows where he is going, a rare thing, he purchases a ticket for 200 yen and goes to the platform for Shinjuku. There are no gate demons on the way in, but just try getting out...(Yes folks, we





are going to Hell City.) The Odakyu line is owned by the chain-store of the same name. (They sell lots of chains, and other useful items such as the Excalibur range of enchanted swords. Now available in both Stainless Steel and Tungsten-Carbide edged.) On this line, young Jim has a choice of three flavours of train: The local service, the limited-express and the express. Colloquially known as domestic, express and super-hyper-death express. Being brave, and trusting to his tentacleproof lurking coat, he gets the next train.

Oh no, it's a super-hyper-death express! (see earlier). Thankfully the air-conditioning is on. Less than half an hour later, young Jim staggers off the train at Shinjuku-eki, a lot thinner after a religious experience involving a long-haired maiden with a cute bow, endless legs, a battle-skirtlet and lemur-like eyes. Once he has caught his breath, counted his blessings, waved his Kippu at the second-level demon at the gate, it is on to the Yamanote line for a quick circumnavigate. This is usually a fairly empty and relaxed line to travel on. Our hero's destination, Ikebukuro-eki, is about 20 minutes away. Ikebukuro-eki, the station of a thousand exits. At least one of which is rumoured to be in the twin cities of Helium. It is not raining, so Jim surfaces in order to ascertain a bearing on his destination. There she is Captain, Sunshine City! Set course zero-seven-zero, ahead slow! DQ detectors engaged! Anti-Cute screens engaged! Raise the mainsail, paddle me gibbage, use the jargon, Ooar me hearties. I can smell gold from here!

Restraining his nautical gibberish, our hero sets forth, fifth and sixth, pausing only in an arcade to try out the latest 3-axis rotation ride, care of the intensely cute young woman wearing an air-hostess uniform and a big (cute) smile. 4 terrifying minutes later, our hero considers how lucky he was that he chose the milder space-journey rather than the hot downhill-skier or the very-hot aerobatics. Also that he forgot to have any breakfast. Flank speed now, running for cover since his Anti-Cutes failed, our hero dives beneath the

surface for the crossing of the Reallybigroad.

Radars pinging optimistically, Sunshine 60 dead ahead, the SS Jim patrols for unguarded maidens. Sorry! Looks for his destination. Less than a hundred metres from where he surfaced, he spots the target. Yes folks, those of you that have read this far (give yourself a silver-star). It is that haven from the rough seas of reality, Port Animate.

Any normal UK Anime fan entering these hallowed waters would probably explode in a buying frenzy the same way NPCs (Non Player Characters) in tentacle movies do. Explode I mean. Fortunately our hero is a complete deviant, and thus (major plot spoiler!) is likely to survive with his wallet intact, even if holed below the waterline.

Animate is a respectable sized Anime shop, for those of you familiar with the Sheffield Space Centre, it's marginally smaller. If you're not: the store has about 5 metres of frontage and is close on 10 metres long. If one stood in the centre, the cashiers would look at you funny, you would be standing on the central (goodies) reservation.

The door is on the East wall, along with the laserdisk rack. The entire South wall is manga, in terrifying quantities, from the domestic little 200 pagers to ART OF LAPUSIKIKIAÄ. An awful lot of Cute 'til you barf too. The West wall, is materials for budding artists, such as Letratone and those handy scalpel things that are best used for hacking off tentacles. North by North-West, the CD rack, quite a small(!) selection here, around 6 square metres of nothing but Anime CDs. North-East and also on the central reservation are the goodies shelves. A word about goodies. Only the really popular stuff here. Don't expect to find that obscure GOOD MORNING ALTHEA body art book here, you have no chance. Starting with Silent Möbius, Ranma ½, Lum, Lodoss War and The Weathering Continent (Advanced Bludgeon those Dragons!) before you get to NAUSKIKIPUTA and RED PORK! (Miyazaki's latest, the amount of coverage this gets in the anime magazines is just not true! Not that I

have anything against it, indeed I think he is one of the better directors out, it's just...well, if he did comedy or science fiction, you'd never hear me stop ranting.)

RED PORK! (Sorry – Porco Rosso) is a super little story, all about pigs, a girl called FIO (though she might well have been called NAUSHEETA) lots of flying, water and as a logical extension, flying boats. Obviously an excuse for the old Miyazaki exploding water, his favourite shade of blue and clouds with a consistency of porridge. Regardless, I'll still like it because he spins such a jolly good yarn.

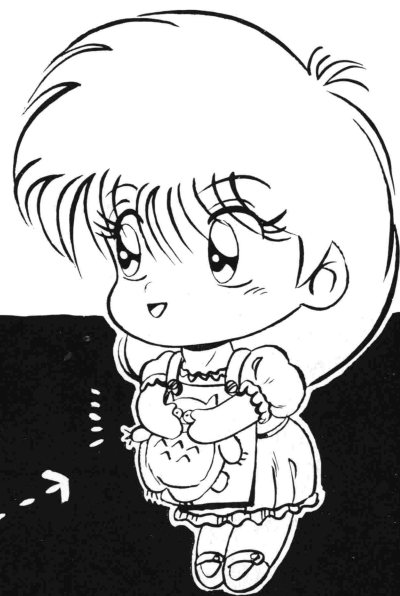
Hanging from the ceiling are posters, cute artworks, the odd signed one by some 'name' or other. The artworks are not for sale, so don't waste your time, a lot seem to be done by the staff. On the other hand, the posters are, and there are a lot of them.

Right next to the door, on the wall is the Forthcoming Attractions notice board. An awesome prospect.

Chisai-Totoro in hand, our hero foolishly picks up a couple of laserdiscs and CDs. Especially when a couple of pretty young ladies ask him to get them a ShiDee that is out of their reach. Some 40,000 yen lighter, the SS Jim sails out, listing to starboard and taking on water from a hole in his wallet...

CUTE, Japan runs on CUTE. There's CUTE to the right. OL's (office ladies) for example. CUTE to the left, like advertisements. CUTE all around. One false move on the full train and you could die of CUTE. The girl who advertises Fujitsu is OVERCUTE. Her name is Arisa and there are these life-sized cardboard cut-outs of her. I want one! (She is a film starlet too, a psychic schoolgirl who causes a lot of mayhem.) Until next time, Ja ne!

完



Illustrations by Wil Overton.



# BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

## STORIES OF KNIGHT

by Roger 'R

Do beautiful babes in butt-blasting battlesuits catch your eye? Well how about ink blue cyborgs with an affinity for mass destruction? Would it help if I threw in a handsome macho man who packs a bazooka pistol? If action, high technology, corporate ethics and somber, dramatic stories are your thing, then read on!

Some people out there have accused me of being THE Bubblegum Crisis source in England. Well, I'm not one to brag, so I'll let the words speak for themselves!

So what exactly is Bubblegum Crisis (BGC) you ask? One must analyze the opening logo in part one: "Mega Tokyo 2032 – The Story Of Knight Sabers". It is the tale of four exceptional women – Celia, Priss, Linna and Nene. It would be easy for BGC to disintegrate into a mindless free-for-all of violence, but there is much more to the series than the Hardsuit battles. Each character has a distinct personality; a set of values that they cling to...a realistic degree of humanity (albeit not always good!). We are fortunate enough to behold brilliant characterization in the name of justice. The focus of the series is Celia and the



# BUBBLEGUM SABERS

## 2032-2033

### AD' Duarte

legacy of her father's dream.

Dr. Stingray, who helped create Buma technology, envisioned his work as beneficial to mankind. However, Mason, a less than scrupulous Genom executive, had a different agenda. His murder of Dr. Stingray is shown to us through a flashback in part one.

I'd like to interject a side note of interest here. The music video compilation HURRICANE LIVE 2032 contains the video for the song "Asu E Touchdown". In this video, we are treated to an inside look at the formation of the Knight Sabers. It shows Celia's recruitment of the girls as well as some of their past lives. Priss, who recently lost her lover in a drive-by shooting (carried out by Mason), decides on revenge as the \*Advanced Police (ADP) can do nothing to help. Nene was challenged to hack into a computer system and discovers that her talents are needed. Linna, having missed the cut for a dance troupe, feels depressed and alone. This video gives us an interesting insight into the girls' motivations. It's well worth checking out. →

**\*This is another version of the name used in Japanese sources, as well as the more usual Armoured Defense Police.**



## TINSEL CITY

The first three acts form a trilogy based around Mason's ambitions. Part one, "Tinsel City," introduces the main cast, the Buma and the ADP. It is these suicidal lawmen who have the (Herculean) task of (attempting to) stopping the havoc-wreaking Buma. There are two problems with this: 1) None of them are Hercules and 2) Their weapons are grossly inferior. Thankfully, the Knight Sabers are around to lend the ADP a helping hand when they need it (which is very often!).

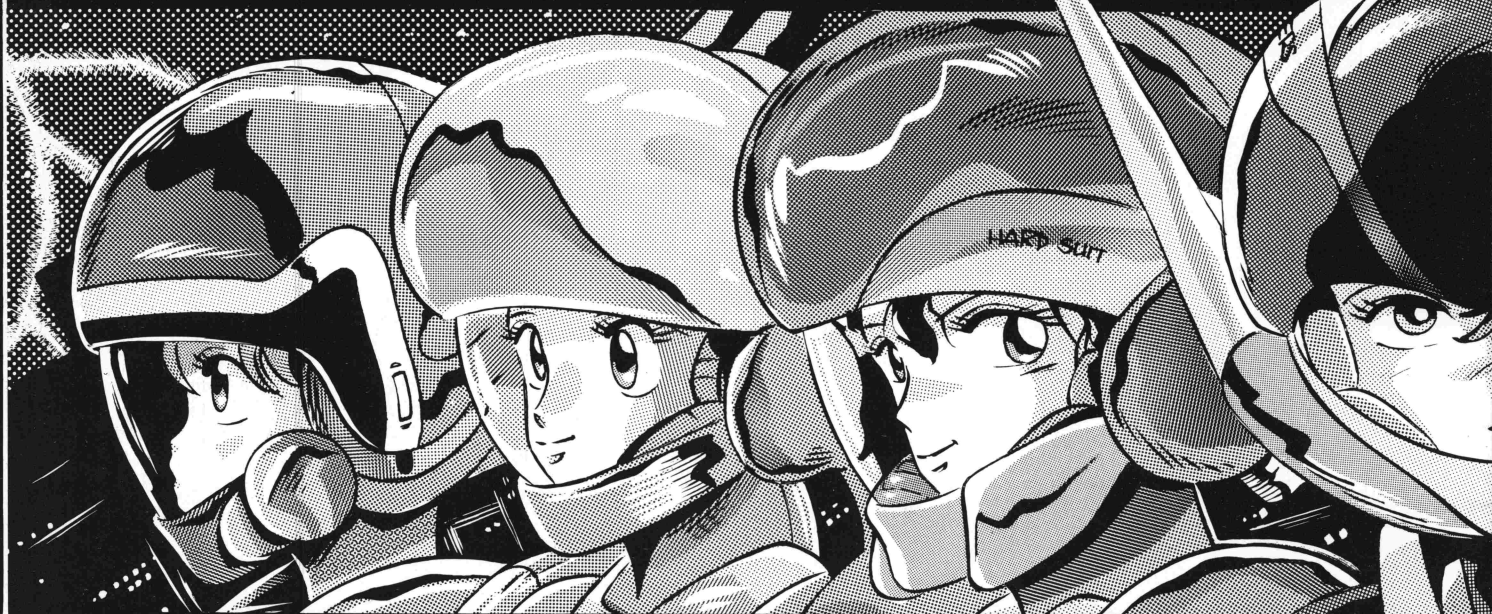
Add in a rock concert (performed by Priss and the Replicants), car/Buma/motorcycle chases and a dash of bureaucratic intrigue centred on a little girl kidnapped by an ambitious Buma (Frederick) and you have a whirlwind of mayhem and action! If you need a twist, how about the fact that little Cynthia is (unknowingly) a link to an orbiting "Star

Wars" satellite? Yes, destruction is dished out in abundance as the Knight Sabers defeat Frederick and Cynthia obliterates herself (and an entire "floating city") to save the day. The act ends with a bird's eye view of the destruction.

## BLOW UP

Part three, "Blow Up," is the climax to the trilogy. A new type of Buma destroys the ADP's ultimate weapon, the K-11 powered suit, along with parts of the city. This is followed by Priss actually getting caught for speeding! We are then introduced to 10 year old Sho and his

from the previous formula to give us J.B. Gibson and his Griffon sports car. While driving, Gibson was attacked by bikers, his wife Naomi going into shock as a result and remaining unable to walk. Thus, he metes out his brand of justice on Mega Tokyo's Super Ramp highway with his "modified" Griffon. During the episode, we meet Jisan, a gifted mechanic who hires the Knight Sabers to stop Gibson's rampage. The story escalates into a great chase scene along the Super Ramp involving the Knight Sabers, Gibson, the Griffon and the ADP. The girls rescue Gibson and Naomi while the ADP destroy the Griffon. This episode gives us our only glimpse of Priss' HIGHWAY STAR motorcycle. The ending sees Priss and Jisan attempting to repair the bike after Priss dumped it during Gibson and Naomi's rescue.



mom. Priss has become his guardian angel and converses with his mother. Simultaneously, Genom begins to implement a plan to buy out property in troubled neighbourhoods; Mason wants the land to build a factory. Priss and Leon have a run in with Mason and his bodyguard. Soon after, Priss is devastated when she finds Sho's mother dead in the wrecked building in which they lived, her attempt to retrieve their money having failed. Fueled by vengeance, the girls again suit up to fight Genom. The climatic battle ends with Mason learning Celia's identity. She is then forced to kill Mason, leaving him staring at his reflection in a pool of his own blood. The act ends with Priss taking Sho to a foster home.

## BORN TO KILL

Enter part two, "Born To Kill". In the opening, we see three SCUBA diving women retrieve the skeletal remains of Cynthia. The story's centred around a woman named Irene. A student in Linna's aerobics class, her fiancée was in a research accident at Genom. His team was attempting to merge Cynthia's "black box" with a new SuperBuma. We also learn that Mason has great taste in bodyguards – three DFB's (Definitely Fabulous Babes) to be exact! However, these aren't the kind of women

mom. Priss has become his guardian angel and converses with his mother. Simultaneously, Genom begins to implement a plan to buy out property in troubled neighbourhoods; Mason wants the land to build a factory. Priss and Leon have a run in with Mason and his bodyguard. Soon after, Priss is devastated when she finds Sho's mother dead in the wrecked building in which they lived, her attempt to retrieve their money having failed. Fueled by vengeance, the girls again suit up to fight Genom. The climatic battle ends with Mason learning Celia's identity. She is then forced to kill Mason, leaving him staring at his reflection in a pool of his own blood. The act ends with Priss taking Sho to a foster home.

## REVENGE ROAD

Part four, "Revenge Road," breaks away

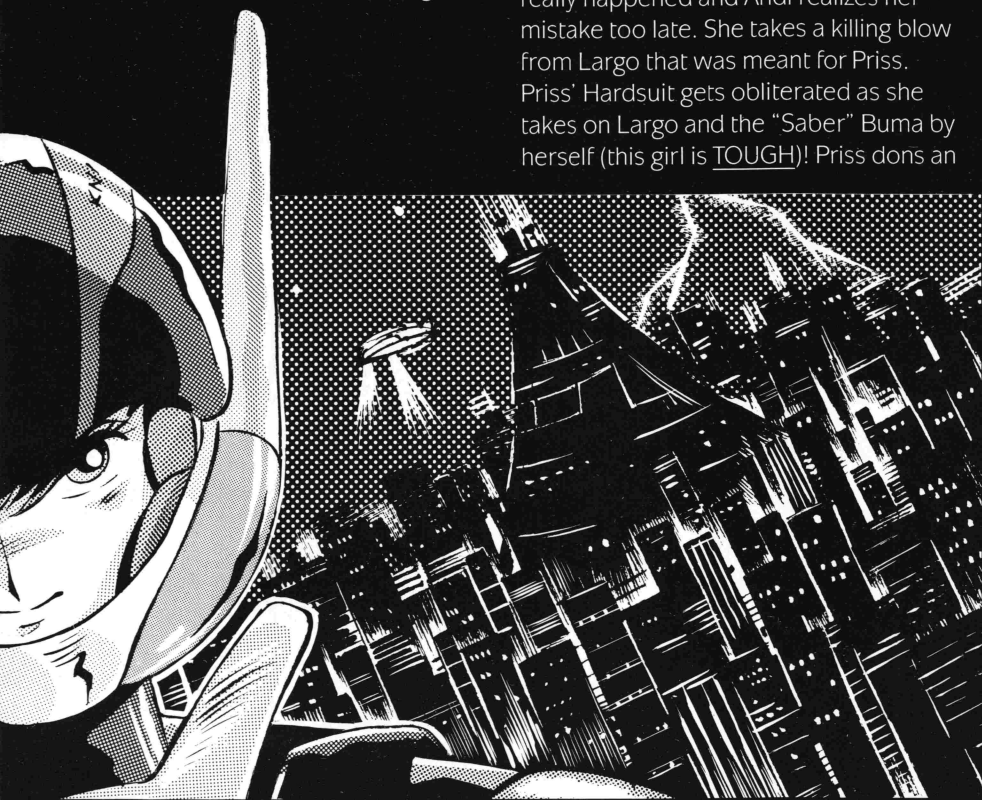
## MOONLIGHT RAMBLER

Part five "Moonlight Rambler," focuses on two Sexaroid Buma, Sylvia and Andi, who escape from a space station in the opening. The Sexaroids, a.k.a. 33-S Buma, can't reproduce their own blood cells: do you like vampires? Need I continue? Sylvie befriends Priss as she continues on her quest. She hopes to infiltrate Genom and retrieve a disc containing information on the production flaw of Buma like herself. She hopes that the disc will spell freedom for her and Andi – a chance at a normal life. She's discovered and chased by Buma to the DD battlesuit she accidentally appropriated from the space station. This serious piece of machinery makes short work of the pursuing Buma and Leon in his K-12 powered suit. He's saved by the Knight Sabers, who



themselves have trouble with the DD. The suit overrides Sylvie and acts on its own. Priss must then kill Sylvie to save Mega Tokyo from the mini Neutron bomb in the DD. Sylvie's death follows in a gut wrenching, emotional scene. Celia hears someone call her name – it's Largo, their new nemesis revealed in the chilling ending.

This is a good place to bring up an interesting point about the series...the music. Kinoko Ohmori's outstanding vocals invigorate the scenes they accompany. The closing songs to parts 3-5 and 7 are emotionally compelling. The music score follows the scene quite well, with one exception. The closing for



part two was inappropriately upbeat for the ending. Most of the best music from the series comes from parts 4 and 5 (kudos to Junji Fujita and Hiroyuki Sato for their excellent work). I feel that this is icing on the cake for an already outstanding series.

## RED EYES

Part six, "Red Eyes," opens with the Knight Sabers involved in criminal activity. It's actually Largo's Buma; he has very big plans and wants to discredit the girls to get them out of his way. Meanwhile, Priss is devastated over Sylvie's loss and decides it's time for her to leave. Celia goes to visit Priss and try to convince her to stay. But Priss has had enough – Celia is called away by Nene before they can finish their talk. Soon after, the Knight Sabers, minus one, arrive at Tokyo City Bank to combat the

"Saber" Buma. The girls are easily defeated as Maki comes to their rescue. They need Priss!

As Priss leaves Mega Tokyo, she passes a car driven by Andi! Largo has twisted her into his pawn and Priss begins to play into his gambit. Soon after, Leon and Priss discover that Largo is actually a Buma with access to the SDI satellite! After his firepower demonstration, Largo confronts Genom's president, Quincy, and demands control of the company. Priss arrives (in her Hardsuit) to battle Largo and he plays his ace; Andi stabs Priss as retribution for her murder of Sylvie. Priss tearfully explains what really happened and Andi realizes her mistake too late. She takes a killing blow from Largo that was meant for Priss. Priss' Hardsuit gets obliterated as she takes on Largo and the "Saber" Buma by herself (this girl is TOUGH)! Priss dons an

updated Hardsuit as help arrives in the nick of time. Together again, with Leon's help, the Knight Sabers defeat their adversaries.

## DOUBLE VISION

Part seven, "Double Vision," is another story of revenge. Vision, a worldwide singing sensation, is Irene's (from part two) older sister on a path of vengeance. Not only was Irene killed by Genom, but their parents were also killed by Gulf/Bradley Co. (G/B). Genom is currently attempting a co-venture with G/B to manufacture a new Buma. Reika uses her Vision alter ego to travel to Tokyo to hunt down a G/B executive (McLaren). The Knight Sabers play bodyguard for McLaren, but lose him (and Linna) to Reika's group. Priss simultaneously gets the tar whipped out of her by Ko, Reika's confidant and co-pilot of the Genki

mecha. Linna discovers the link between Reika and Irene, but cannot understand her need for revenge. Ko arranges a meeting with Quincy – McLaren knows the new Buma's weakness and he uses that to get a chance to get Quincy. The meeting goes sour when Ko shoots (an android replica of) Quincy. Well, IT hits the fan and the girls arrive to help defeat the G/B-Genom Buma. Once again, some wonderful characterization and even a closing concert by Vision.

## SCOOP CHASE

Part eight, "Scoop Chase/Lisa," is a spotlight for Nene, revolving around Lisa Barnett, the ADP chief's niece. It opens with the morning routine of each cast member (a nice touch!). She's a photojournalist out to get the story on the Knight Sabers. Nene is assigned as her escort and I'm sure you can imagine the level of chaos that ensues.

Eventually, Lisa takes a picture of a battle in which Nene's face shield is shattered – her secret is exposed! Enter Meriamu, a twisted executive (aren't they all) in a Genom branch company who has modified Buma and his own schemes. He plans to take out the ADP building and use its resources to help him smash the Knight Sabers and take over Genom (just a tad ambitious, ne?). The remainder of the episode shows us the siege of the ADP HQ, and the Knight Sabers, attempts to free it. Nene and Maki avert a generator meltdown and save the day. One thing worth mention is Nene's leap from a bubble head to a capable member of the team. The scene where Linna and Priss tease her about her combat prowess and body fat is priceless, as is Nene giving Priss a ticket for speeding! The act (and series) ends with Lisa handing Nene an envelope before leaving; it contains the incriminating photo and negative disc.

In closing, I believe the series is well worth seeing, either by viewing the originals and using a script or synopsis (as I do) or by purchasing AnimEigo's subtitled tapes (soon to be available on PAL in England!). Bubblegum Crisis is many things – action/adventure, melodrama and even, occasionally, a comedy. But I think, and I'm sure that some will agree, it is ultimately a state of mind. The entire Artmic/Youmex creative team has my undying gratitude for giving us something more than just girls with guns. Knight Sabers, Sanjo! (Thanks to Protoculture Addicts, AnimEigo, B-Club, Kathi C. and Helen McC).

# BUBBLEGUM BOOKS

Every popular Japanese series is supported by a mass of merchandising, including beautifully printed books so packed with visual information that the fact that most of the text is in Japanese is no more than a minor inconvenience. Most of these are very hard to get in the West, but well worth the effort. Try Books Nippon (071-248 4956) or The Japanese Centre (071-439 8035), both in London: Books Nippon in particular have a good ordering service. Expect to pay roughly twice the yen price from either of these sources. If you find Japanese books in your local sf or comic store, prices may be marked up by 300-500%.

These are just a few of the best BUBBLEGUM CRISIS books to look out for.

**B-CLUB FILM COMIC:** Bubblegum Crisis

Bandai/980 Yen

Acts 1-3 in detail, colour frame blow-ups, sketches and short manga stories.

**B-CLUB VISUAL COMIC:** Bubblegum Crisis B.G. Art 89 Only

Bandai/980 Yen

Acts 4-5 and the music video HURRICANE LIVE 2032 in detail, as the Film Comic but more manga and a specially cute photo-strip story.

**COMPLETED FILE 5:** Bubblegum Crisis 1

**COMPLETED FILE 6:** Bubblegum Crisis 2

Movic/1000 Yen each

Acts 1-3, some free blow-ups, but mostly storyboards, concept sketches, chara designs and layouts.

**B-CLUB SPECIAL:** Ken-Ichi Sonoda

Bandai/2000 Yen

Mostly full colour paintings/illustrations and character sketches by master chara designer Sonoda, includes some RIDING BEAN and GALL FORCE designs but mostly features BUBBLEGUM CRISIS.

**B-CLUB SPECIAL:** Artmic Design Works

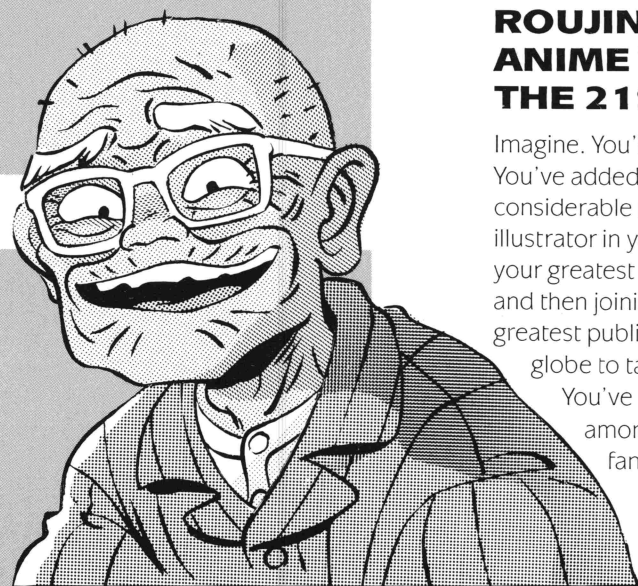
Bandai/1700 Yen

A look at the fabulous designs created by ARTMIC, including those for BUBBLEGUM CRISIS.

**B-CLUB SPECIAL:** Bubblegum Crisis, The Story of Knight Sabers 2032-2033

Bandai/2800 Yen

The ultimate BGC book, covers all 8 OAV's plus HURRICANE LIVE 2032, cast + staff, interviews, merchandise, storyboards, concept sketches, chara outlines and even a map of Mega Tokyo. What more could you want? Track it down and take it prisoner.



## ROUJIN-Z: ANIME TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY

Imagine. You're a famous manga artist. You've added to your already considerable fame as a comic artist and illustrator in your own country by taking your greatest work to-date, animating it, and then joining with some of the greatest publishing houses across the globe to take your works international. You've become a household word among comics fans and animation fans worldwide.

## WHAT DO YOU DO FOR AN ENCORE?

If your name is Katsuhiro Otomo, you don't rest on your laurels. Instead, you continue to do what you do best: write fantastic stories of regular, everyday people in decidedly irregular circumstances. During the time that AKIRA the comic was in its final stages in 1989-90, Otomo was hard at work on two movie projects. One, the live-action World Apartment Horror, is a tale of immigrants from various countries in a flophouse owned by Yakusa whose flavor goes back to his Sayonara Nippon days. The second would be what fans on this side of the Pacific, appetites whetted by AKIRA, were waiting for: his next animated feature.



## THE BEST STAFF EVER GATHERED

As he'd done in his preparations for AKIRA the movie, Otomo assembled powerful backup to bring his vision to the screen. First, he brought in his friend from his days at Manga Weekly Action, Hisashi Eguchi, to handle the character design, while he himself handled the scripting and mechanics design. No stranger to animation, Eguchi, the creator of the long-running comedy strip STOP!! Hibari-kun, the boxing manga Eiji, and the truly gonzo humor anthology Kotobuki Horror Show, while possessing a realistic drawing style like Otomo's, contained just the hint of lunacy needed for this story. Next, as chief director, he pulled in Hiroyuki Kitakubo. Again, no stranger to anime fans, the man whose unique vision gave us Urusei Yatsura 2-Beautiful Dreamer, Twilight Q: File 538, and Black Magic M-66 came into the Roujin Z project fresh off his success with Patlabor: The Movie. Supporting the triumvirate was a top-drawer cast: Bun (Urusei Yatsura 4) Itakura and Ogawa Mishio, music. Fumio (Wings of Onneamise) Iida, animation director; Hiroshi (Secret of Blue Water) Sasaki, art director. With the backing of Tokyo Theatres Co., Inc. The Television, Inc. (a division of Kodansha publishing), Movic, TV Asahi, and Sony Music Entertainment (Japan), Otomo was ready to begin.

## "SUPER ENTERTAINMENT ANIMATION"

It was Otomo's concern that animation in Japan was growing stale. At the first press conference in November, 1990, when asked why he wrote Roujin-Z,

Otomo stated, "The world of anime is getting narrower and narrower. The day of robot anime is antique, with pretty girls being threatened by monsters. With [Roujin Z], if we can jog imagination a little, then the genius that is "anime" will once again spread wide." And, true to Kitakubo's style, the film explored one of the more urgent social issues in Japan today: the problems of the aged and shut-in. In a country where familial responsibility and respect for the aged is paramount, what do you do when the population is living longer, living space is getting smaller, and younger people, anxious to live their own lives, aren't as ready to take care of their parents as they once were?

## "HARUKO-SAAAAN..."

The heroine of Roujin-Z (Old Man Z) is nineteen year-old Haruko Mihashi, a student at medical school. She wears a super-short miniskirt at her part-time waitress job at the legendary Annie Miller restaurant; she also helps at shut-in's houses as a volunteer. At the heart of the Roujin-Z story is the "Z-project". By the year 2020 in Japan, one out of every four people will be 65 or older. The Z-project, meant to help alleviate the problem of caring for the bedridden, involves putting all bed-ridden aged in a special moving bed. Designated the Z-001 and implanted with a 6th-generation biochip, it can synchronize itself with its user's brain and take care of its needs. Old man Kijuro Takazawa, one of Haruko's shut-ins who often calls her while she's at work, has been designated as the test subject.

## "I'VE FALLEN, BUT I CAN GET BACK UP!"

The thought of Takazawa being cared for by a machine, no matter how fantastic, is abhorrent to Haruko, and she says as much during the initial press conference. It's when Takazawa tries to contact Haruko through her computer terminal at school that things begin to escalate towards the story's climax: the Z-001, now transformed into an assimilating robot, fighting its opposite number, a military robot, on the outskirts of the resort town of Kamakura. In between is a story about people caring for and about people, about the power of love and the things it makes people do; of how even the best intentions can go horribly, comically awry.

With the cast of characters that includes an aging group of computer hackers, a project chief with his own agenda, a loving spirit, and a fat calico cat, Roujin-Z, rather than being an AKIRA clone, is exactly what Otomo intended it to be: A "Super Entertainment Animation of an unprecedented scale...."

完

# ROUJIN

by John T. Carr

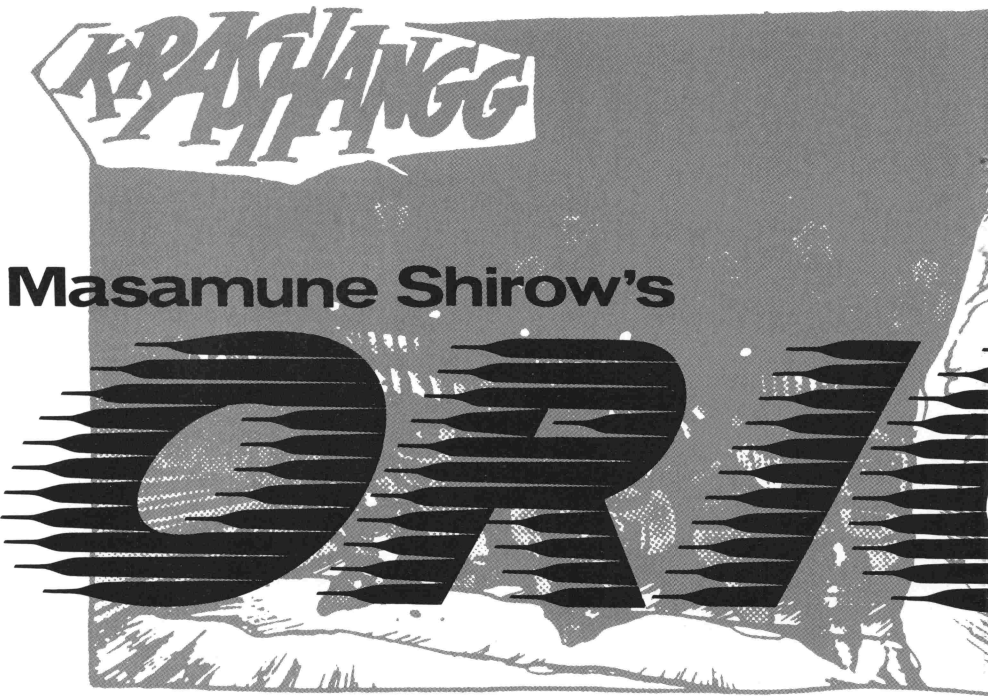


**Masamune Shirow's new manga from Dark Horse and Studio Proteus is a six-issue limited series premiering in September 92. Helen McCarthy and Wil Overton review the first part.**

Helen:

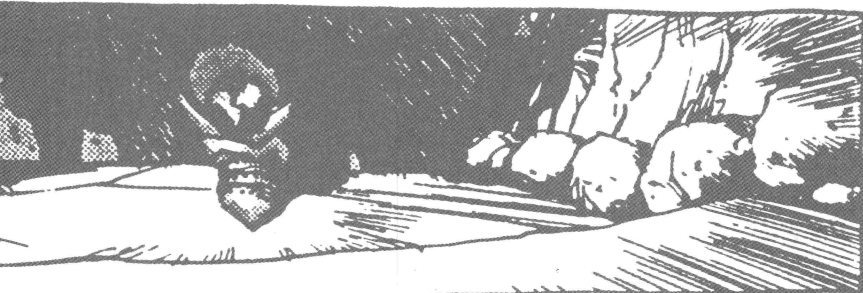
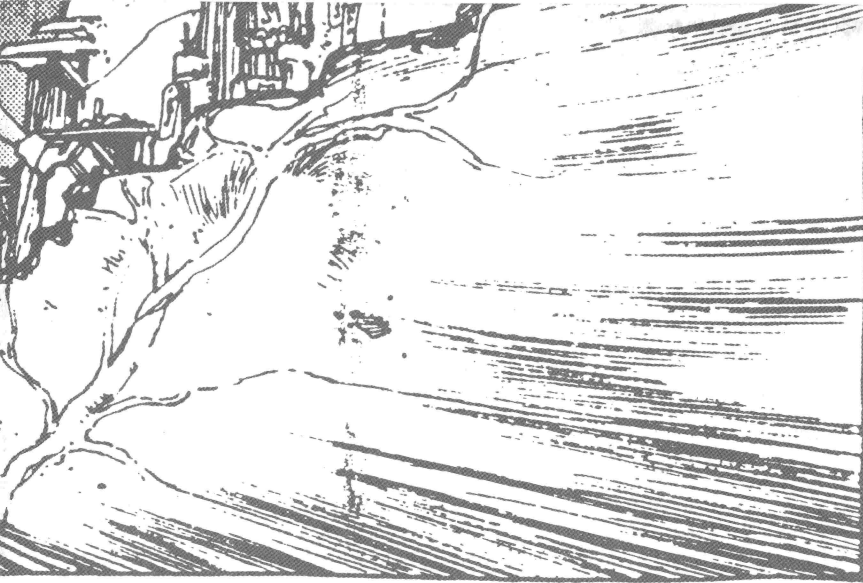
This is a must have. I'll leave Wil to talk about Shirow's ever more fluid drawing style, his ability to pack a page with action, his joyous, visual inventiveness. I'll just tell you how I'm intrigued and delighted by the story spun here by Shirow the writer. For me, this has two essential elements: the ability to drive a complex plot along at just the right pace, and the ability to observe, and therefore create not just stereotypes but real characters.

Plot first: it appears to be vast as well as complex, and Shirow being Shirow we may never see the working out of all its ramifications in full; but by the end of part one we know where it's headed, and a good deal of how it started and how the main protagonists are likely to proceed; yet we're still intrigued and not once have we been "voiced-overed." Remember how, in *ROBOTECH*, a superior masculine voice dips in every few minutes to explain the action, just in case you've been too stupid to pick up on what went on before your very eyes just now, or even worse, to throw in some vital plot point you couldn't possibly have picked up on because it had been cut from the on-screen story? That's being voiceovered; feeling you've been condescended to, suckered, or both. Shirow never does that. He tells you enough, in subtle asides and snippets of halfheard conversation as well as mainstream action, that you never feel left out, yet never find things too predictable. Pace, timing – whatever you call it, he gets it right. Then there are the characters – visually intriguing, given some great dialogue (well served in the translation by Toren Smith and Fred Schodt) and impressively real. Look at the scenes where heroine Seska and her friends spend a boozy night in a karaoke bar – you can see the same thing any evening in a dozen venues in the city of London, though the gaggle of secretaries in their teens and twenties are unlikely to be discussing the linkage of will and matter as the basis of all physical existence. Or see the bottom two panels of the page where Seska blows yet another chance to impress tall, blond and gorgeous Commander Ronnel with her



Masamune Shirow's





sophisticated charm. What's more, all these observations are made with such obvious affection that the question of stereotyping just doesn't arise. What's it ABOUT? Why should I spoil it for you by telling? You'll have much more fun finding out for yourself. What I will tell you is that Shirow is doing wonderful things here, things I don't intend to miss as they develop. Take my advice – order ORION now!

Wil:

Just ask yourself why you like Masamune Shirow's manga. I would hazard a guess that a fair amount of people would go for the artwork, he seems to combine the Japanese fast cinematic style with endearing characters (CUTE girls!) and of course, great machinery, in just the right proportions. So that's why I think anybody coming to ORION straight from APPLESEED and expecting the same style of very tight complex high-tech cyber-punk, might, at first glance, seem a little disappointed. But it would be their loss if they were to dump the comic at just a quick look-over because just this first issue proves that Shirow's ability doesn't rely on merely filling each page with as many speed lines as possible, the pictures are an integral part of the storytelling, just as they should be. The first thing that comes to mind, to me, is that Shirow has had a lot of fun with the drawing of ORION, and as a result the artwork is a lot looser and more fluid than before, that's not to say it's sloppy though, far from it, the figurework is as masterful as ever with poses never looking forced and some really nice observations, especially in the karaoke pub scene Helen mentioned earlier, and the mystical element gives Shirow the chance to show us his full range of ancient temples, bizarre incantations and extra-dimensional spaceships. In short, I don't think that Shirow's artwork has evolved so that he'll never be able to draw APPLESEED again, he's just adapted it to fit in with this new story. The old Shirow is still in there (did I not mention earlier, the CUTE girls) but he's all mixed up with this new slant on things. I agree with Helen, don't think about it, just get it!

完

All rights reserved by  
Masamune Shirow/Sheisinscha  
English translation Copyright 1992  
Studio Proteus/Dark Horse

## Part Two: Conversion to Anime

In the last Roleplaying Connection (issue # 1) I presented the anime inspired roleplaying games currently on the market. These are all fine systems, but what do you do if you don't want to play a Veritech Pilot (Robotech), or a Steiner Mechwarrior (Battletech), or a Pirate Captain in the Bendar Galaxy (Mekton)? If you have a favorite anime movie or series that you'd like to roleplay in, a lot of work lies ahead of you...But you'll find it worth it!

Decide first on what you would like to play, then ask yourself what kind of game is it? Is it straight Science-Fiction, like Captain Harlock and Gall Force; is it Cyberpunk, like Bubblegum Crisis and Cyber City Oedo; is it Fantasy, like Shurato, Arion and Lodoss War; Horror, like Supernatural Beast City; Present-Day, like Cityhunter; or is it a Mecha Opera, like Gundam, Votoms, or The Five Star Stories?

Once you've decided on a game "universe," you must find a roleplaying system to support it – let's use an example here that appeared at the Anime Day convention this year – Nadia; The Secret Of Blue Water. The background of Nadia is set in an idealised Jules-Verneian Victorian world, with brave and steadfast heroes, fiendish cads and bounders, and amazing inventions and machines. Examining the current range of rpg's on sale points to an ideal answer – GDW's Space: 1889 system, where the British Empire spans to Mars, and wooden Ether Flyers ply between worlds... With background and system selected, the hard part starts – to run a roleplaying campaign (ongoing series of games) the Gamesmaster must work up source material and write adventures, and this is work enough even with an "off-the-

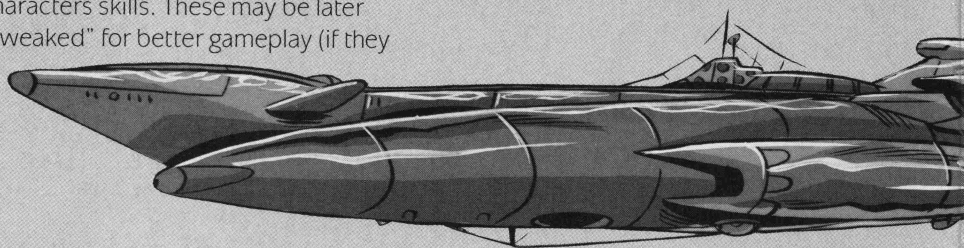
peg" system. With a conversion, the initial workload to set up the game will be much higher.

Returning to the Nadia/Space: 1889 example, the GM will have to watch episodes, read up on the subject matter, and make notes on the background of the series. In addition, if characters from the source anime are to be used in the game, either as player characters or "extras," the GM will have to scrutinize the apparent abilities of those characters – how agile they are, how strong, what skills they possess, etc. etc. Although I've used the example of Space: 1889 as a template for a Nadia rpg, there are other systems that could also do the job – an example is Call Of Cthuhlu, a Twenties-era horror rpg which could be used, but it would mean more work in the set-up because of the greater dissimilarities between it and the anime. The moral of the story is: Don't use Dungeons & Dragons to run Space Cruiser Yamato.

As an example of the conversion process, here is a step-by-step run through of converting West End Games' Star Wars system to run a Dirty Pair campaign.

Starting with Kei and Yuri, the Dirty Pair themselves, the basic Star Wars template can be used as is, with no alterations. The Star War game uses a system of "dice codes" for character skills – a target number is given to the difficulty of a task, and the character rolls the number of dice for the applicable skill. A higher number than the difficulty means success, a lower one means failure. Naturally, the higher the character's dice code, the better the chance of beating the difficulty. By watching anime and reading background material, the GM can determine "ballpark" figures for the characters skills. These may be later "tweaked" for better gameplay (if they

are too good, the game becomes boring; if they are too poor, the game becomes pointless). Example: Kei is seen to be quite handy with a laser pistol ("an expert shot"), so we can give her a Blaster Skill dice code of 5D (that means she throws 5 six-sided dice to determine her accuracy with a blaster – she could score anything from five to thirty!). This process of estimation and playtesting is used to determine all of the character's skills. Once you have your main characters, you can move on the supporting cast, in this case, Mughli the cat-creature and Nammo the robot. The Star Wars system provides guidelines for alien and robot characters, so creating these two is not much different than from creating "normal" characters. Next, you need to equip the characters, and here the similarity between systems helps, because the Star Wars equipment can quite simply be used in the Dirty Pair game. In addition, the Dirty Pair's starship, the Lovely Angel, may be needed in the game – once more, the GM must follow the guidelines of taking notes and comparing it to existing game material...In the case of Star Wars, you could compare the performance of the Lovely Angel with that of the Millennium Falcon, and de-engineer the Angel's stats from there. The hardest part is the background – the "universe." The United Galactica of Dirty Pair could be thought of as a "good" version of the Empire of Star Wars, and so a GM could use all the Imperial stormtroopers and TIE fighters, but instead describe them as U.G. soldiers and patrolships. This sort of "cribbing" from the origin system only works if the two concepts are close in style, and even then it may grow stale if used too much. One of the benefits of



# THE ROLEPLAYING CONNECTION

by Jim Swallow

**PART 2**



this kind of conversion is that existing adventures can be converted too. Example: (Star Wars) The rebels must rescue a defecting Imperial admiral from a secret prison hidden in an asteroid belt. (Dirty Pair) The pair must rescue a captured U.G. spacefleet admiral from a pirate base in an asteroid belt. Only the names have been changed to protect the innocent! Some rpg systems are available that deliberately have no background – they are designed to be customised by players and GMs in any way they see fit. Two prime examples are ICE's Hero system and Steve Jackson Games GURPS (Generic Universal Role Playing System) and GDN's forthcoming Dangerous Dimensions rules. Of the three, GURPS is perhaps the better supported with a good rules framework and a lot of supplemental worldbooks. One point that "blank" systems have over others is that converting a "blank" doesn't require any knowledge of the original background material, because there isn't any – but this can be balanced by the fact that working from a converted game means that when new rules expansions and adventures become available, you may be able to utilise them in your campaign. In the final analysis, it comes down to how much time and effort you can invest

in the game...but it's worth it in the long run! Remember, too, that the above applies to games aside from roleplaying – if you just want to play Zak versus Gundam battles, with a copy of the Battletech rules and some ingenuity, you can do it. An excellent example of this was also seen at the Anime Day convention – a tabletop Space Cruiser Yamato battle game using the Full Thrust space combat rules from Ground Zero Games.

To round up, here's a short list of possible anime-to-rpg conversions as a guideline:

- AKIRA** – Cyberpunk, Shadowrun
- BUBBLEGUM CRISIS** – Cyberspace, Cyberpunk 2020
- CAPTAIN HARLOCK** – Mekton Empire
- CITYHUNTER** – Top Secret, Mercenaries, Spies, And Private Eyes
- DIRTY PAIR** – Star Wars, Megatraveller, GURPS Space
- THE FIVE STAR STORIES** – Mekton, Battletech/Mechwarrior
- GALL FORCE** – Traveller 2300, Megatraveller, Star Frontiers
- GUNDAM** – Mekton, Battletech/ Mechwarrior

- NAUISICAÄ** – GURPS Fantasy, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
- RANMA ½** – Teenagers From Outer Space
- PATLABOR** – Mekton
- SAINT-SEIYA** – Champions, Golden Heroes, Marvel Superheroes, DC Heroes
- SAMURAI PIZZA CATS** – Toon
- SPACE CRUISER YAMATO** – Star Wars, Star Fleet Battles, Full Thrust
- SUPERNATURAL BEAST CITY** – GURPS Horror, Chill, Call Of Cthuhlu
- SHURATO** – Champions, Golden Heroes, Marvel Superheroes, DC Heroes
- YOTODEN** – AD&D Oriental Adventures, Bushido, GURPS Japan

Aknowledgements: Darren Ashmore for his Nadia/Space: 1889 conversion, Paul Davidson for his Space Cruiser Yamato/ Full Thrust conversion.

Post Script – an an addendum to the first Roleplaying Connection article, which listed anime-inspired RPG's, a new addition has appeared on the scene in the form of Mecha!, a miniatures combat system with some role-playing elements, Mecha!, and its "Aztec History" supplement(!) Spirit Warrior Empire are produced by Seventh Street Games of San Jose, California.

完

Illustration by Will Overton.





# IT'S ALIVE!

By Peter J. Evans

Many thanks to the October 1991 issue of *Omni Magazine*, in which much of the following data was found.

A long time ago, in a High School far, far away, a biology teacher once imparted to his class of unwilling idiots the knowledge that living creatures can be identified as such by a set of criteria that they must fulfill. They must move, feed, respire, excrete and reproduce. Anything calling itself an animal and not meeting all those requirements in some way or another is probably lying. I remember this clearly, because I was one of those idiots. I also remember how the teacher then confused the Hell out of us by naming something that fulfilled all of the above conditions quite demonstrably, and yet could not be classed as living. That something is, as anyone who has seen *Backdraft* will tell you, fire. It moves (try and stop it), chews up its fuel like there's no tomorrow, drags in oxygen and converts it to carbon dioxide and other gasses (just like you do), leaves little carbon messages everywhere it goes and, if fuel and oxygen are in plentiful enough supply, gives birth to ravenous progenies pretty much non-stop.

So it screwed up the facts a little and got us thinking, which is all anyone can really ask of a High School teacher anyway. But fantastic fiction has been postulating non-living things that act just like life for as long as it's been around. Forget that young Jilly-come-lately Shelley and her *Frankenstein*: how about the Golem? No, not the glamorous mechanoid from *Adventure! Iczar-3*, but the magically animated clay man of ancient Hebrew mythology. Robots, androids, artificial intellects and artificial life in general are such popular subjects in Japanese fiction that it is interesting to note how closely real science is now shadowing the writers. So closely, in fact, that the very boundaries we set between things that are and are not alive may need to be repositioned.

The field of artificial life as a distinct scientific discipline was first established by Christopher Langton, of the Complex Systems Group Theoretical Division in Los Alamos. He organised the first conference on the subject in 1987. Over a hundred scientists attended, bringing with them a zoofull of synthetic life forms, robots, petri dish cultures, computer programs. Langton's present project is a computer-generated cell: not a simple simulation, but a living, dividing cell whose only difference from those in our own bodies is the fact that it exists only as a computer program. And it



works.

In such a situation, it becomes difficult to determine exactly what is life and what isn't. Some of the most challenging work in the field is being done in purely computer-based systems, like Langton's cell. Buzzing insects, sprouting ferns, worms, fish, even a complete rabbit-fox ecology have been created. Many scientists now believe that the basic qualities of life no longer depend on the materials that living things are built from: it is the basic *structure* of life that is important.

Structure is what most of us fall down on, where our basic prejudices lie. Our view of life requires solidity, a pattern in space and time, complex organisation, metabolism. We base our assumptions on the living entities we see every day; people, pets, bugs, icky things on nature programmes. Life is wet. It's squishy, tactile, fragile. But how wide a range of life are we really seeing? Okay, so there are millions of species in the biosphere, a seemingly infinite variety of insects, mammals, birds, reptiles, plants and so-on. But all those creatures evolved on this one tiny planet, most likely evolved from the same little protein bundles bobbing in the primeval mire. When you really think about it, considering the amount of space there is in the universe, and how much life there might actually be out there, this one-world view is unimaginably narrow.

When you look again at the list of conditions living entities must fill (beginning of the article, remember? All right, go and check again if you must), it's pretty obvious that all of these processes are linked to behaviour, not necessarily physical properties. That's how a flame can get away with the same act, and yet not be alive. Animals, plants and so-on live and metabolize in our Earthly environment, our biosphere. If we can envisage a non-terrestrial biosphere, and regard its occupants to be living, why not the inhabitants of a computer generated world?

Is life independent of material? In *Megazone 23* (anyone mentioning *Robotech the Movie*, hang your head in shame), the character Eve Tokimatsuri was alive enough to win thousands of fans as a singer and television host, despite being, in reality, a seventh-level computer protection system, having no existence outside her mainframe. She could be classed as a simple simulation, were it not for her reaction when she finds the military about to dismantle the last level of the computer she inhabits.

"Help me! I am about to be terminated!"

The last-ditch survival attempts of a complex computer program, or a real being in distress? Watch the show and make up your own mind, but think about this. Throughout the last paragraph, I found it impossible to avoid referring to Eve as 'she'; when logic dictates that a computer program, being sexless, should be called 'it'. On live, Western TV, the same dilemma faced the characters of the series *Max Headroom*. Max himself (!) began 'life' as a computer representation of the mind of a TV reporter, but quickly formed his own personality, views, opinions, and environment, hopping between memory locations to avoid erasure or to annoy people accessing different systems.

While there are many people who would like to pull the plug on Max, and quite a few Anime viewers who'd jump at the chance of putting another Mikimoto idol singer out of their miseries, how can we make a moral judgement on the rights of computer processes versus biological life? Would depriving a data entity of electricity be murder? Personally, I'm not sure, but if a simulated person within a computer system was capable, like Max or Eve, of telling me it didn't want to be shut down, I for one wouldn't disagree with them. From computer life behind the screen to the cutie tapping the keys. We come to a crisis of identification here. Typically we refer to a robot indistinguishable from a human as an android, but this is strictly untrue. Androids are artificial, but 'grown', clone-like, in tanks. They are squishy and wet inside, much more like what we regard as life, the Golems of the future. Human-like robots should have their own name. As an arbitrary term, I prefer 'simulacra'. *Gallforce* has a resident simulacrum in Catty, second name either Nebulart or Rey-Caraway, depending on pre- or post-*Rheagallforce*. Outwardly a *totemo kawaii* little starlet with silver-lilac hair and an amazing affinity with computers (sic), under the skin she closely resembles a feminine Cyberdyne Systems T-800. Where Arnie's famous cyborg has to learn humanity, however, Catty has already done her homework.

She gets puzzled, scared, suprised, and generally acts like a cute Anime cast member should. And a lot of these reactions take place when she is alone: they aren't just simulations used to hide her true form. There are dozens, if not hundreds of Catty simulacra in the *Gallforce* universe, available from vending machines, probably (everything else in Japan is). Replacements notwithstanding, it's still a sad moment when our Catty pretends to be a 10,000 volt cable in order to let her friends escape a dying spaceship in *Eternal Story*. Such voltages don't do her internal anatomy a great deal of good, and anyone who didn't feel a pang of sorrow while watching her spectacular demise truly deserves the title Machine Intelligence.

A more serious treatment of the 'life' of simulacra is shown in the *Robot Carnival* segment *Presence*. In this utterly gorgeous piece of animation, lifelike robots are common and easy to build. However, the world seems to have turned its back on such technology, proved by

a sequence in which a distinguished-looking simulacrum has his head removed by a group of children intent on replaying a Liverpool-Chelsea away fixture.

The still-protesting noggin is then subjected to some tenacious midfield scrapping in which cybernetics, if not football, is the real loser Brian. And so to our hero, a robot designer with amazing hair who is now out of work, since his creations lost favour. In his spare time he is building a real masterpiece, a girl simulacrum who is the last of her kind, since he is now "cut off from his craft". When activated,



**EVE TOKIMATSURI** — super computer and part-time television host & pop star. From *Megazone 23* Part 1.



however, his creation turns out to be more than simply a machine, but a living entity who wants to feel, to grow, to know love. In the time-honoured tradition of co-operation between man and machine, the inventor shuts his creation down with the blunt end of a monkey wrench. "What do we breathe into the things we create?" he asks, and, at the end of his life, she returns to show him. It is life we give them, and, if we are as lucky as he, they will forgive us for it. The whole film, taking as it does the subject of 'Robot' for each of its eight segments, is unsurpassed in its treatment of the robot as life. As an introduction to the purely Japanese phenomenon of 'Soul of the Robot,' look no further.

Masamune Shirow's *Dominion* bridges the gap between simulacra and android in typically enigmatic fashion. In the four OAV's, Annapuma and Unipuma, two near-identical girl terrorists with cat ears and itchy trigger-fingers, are never shown to be anything other than living, breathing, and, at times, slightly hair-brained creatures. However, at the end of the six-part manga continuation to the series, Anna loses an arm in a rather ill-advised confrontation with a tank, revealing the nuts-and-bolts internals of the true simulacrum. Recent translations of the manga and character data files make even more confusing reading, showing that Uni is "an original," and Anna a copy. How alike the girls actually are is, to quote Shirow, "a mystery," as are Uni's true origins and structure, and Anna's reference to "the Twins" at the end of the manga. Further study may yield some definite answers, but with Shirow, who can tell? Definitely in the android camp, however, is Greenpeace Crolis, a living air cleaner, genetically constructed with elements of both animal and plant. No simulacrum she: with her green skin and beautiful, insectile wings she is most certainly a construct, but just as certainly, she is alive.

While constructed, yet living, tissue may seem to be even further into the realms of science-fantasy than computer intelligences and simulacra, this may not be the case. Many researchers are at present continuing the traditional mad-scientist pursuits of getting life started through chemical media. It is a complex and frustrating business: after all, artificial tissues are a totally new technology, with nothing to copy or improve upon other than living matter itself. Successes have been achieved, nonetheless. Scientists at MIT have

recently constructed a chemical system in which molecules replicate by template synthesis. DNA does the same thing in living tissue, but this isn't DNA. Instead, the researchers have used adenosine triphosphates. Whatever they are. More work is being undertaken using the same building blocks that our structure depends on, but in different ways. At the Scripps Clinic Research Institute, Gerald Joyce is attempting to find out more about one of the fundamental paradoxes of the origin of life, by constructing what he refers to as an RNA world. Life as we understand it depends on a close working relationship between enzymes, proteins, DNA and RNA. The tight interaction centres around the coding of DNA for protein synthesis, the products of which themselves decode the DNA and thus allow its replication. And so life continues. It's a closed loop: proteins require the action of DNA, but DNA itself requires the action of the proteins. Just as there is no way out of this loop, it also seems that there is no way in: how did this complex interaction ever start? Nobel laureate Tom Cech has pointed a way out of the paradox with his recent discovery that RNA can sometimes function as an enzyme. Joyce is attempting to construct a closed RNA world in which RNA codes for the synthesis of enzymes, which in turn decode the information-holding RNA and mediate its self-replication. And so life continues: but what kind of life?

There's plenty to choose from. Throw a stick in any Tokyo Anime store and you'll probably hit half-a-dozen such characters, but you'd better duck in case any of them throw it back. Genetic constructs are great: you can draw them with exactly the properties and appearance you require, make them almost superhuman, give them vast intelligence, and still have them looking cute and bleeding when they get shot. They're the perfect solution; you can alter the human form to suit your fantasy, and still keep all the juicy, vulnerable stuff that makes a character interesting. *Iczer-1*, star of *Fight! Iczer-1* and guest *deus ex machina* in *Adventure! Iczer-3*, refers to herself as "an artificial humanoid, created by the Cthulhu." In her battles with her creators and, presumably, the estate of one Howard Phillips Lovecraft, she displays remarkable qualities, not least of which is the much sought-after ability to look Cute and Mean at the same time. She can fire cohesive energy from her fingers, rip monsters limb from limb, fly, teleport, breathe in a vacuum and touch

her fillings with a spoon without screaming. She also perspires, weeps over lost friends, and falls in love with schoolgirls. It is this love which proves both her undoing and her salvation, to the destruction of her enemies and the bafflement of audiences everywhere, as she returns the ravaged and monster-infested Earth to its previous state overnight with no apparent effort (or explanation) whatsoever. While in the first OAV series, *Iczer-1* formed a neat bridge between machine intelligence (Big Gold) and Humanity (Nagisa), her return in *Adventure! Iczer-3* throws up so many family connections that the average viewer is lost without a scoreboard. While Big Gold is mother to *Iczer-1* and *Iczer-2*, who, of course, are sisters, her place is taken in *Iczer-3* by a part of herself called Neos Gold. Neos is mother again to *Iczer-2* (neatly stapled back together after a lesson in short division from *Iczer-1*), but newcomer *Iczer-3*'s mom is Sister Grey, a new character who is referred to as "adviser and possibly lover to *Iczer-1*." *Iczer-3* is *Iczer-1*'s sister, and so is *Iczer-2*, despite having a different mother. Insect, Bigro, Fibre, and the aforementioned Golem are the warrior-daughters of Neos Gold. *Iczer-3* calls them Aunties. Atros is *Iczer-3*'s twin sister and Neos Gold's daughter. Family trees end up looking like spider webs, and the viewing audience give up trying to make sense of all this and sit back to enjoy a fun piece of Anime with lots of explosions and cute characters.

Toshimitsu Suzuki's *Bubblegum Crisis* shows not only several new species of artificial life, but also a remarkable level of intolerance shown by them and to them. In this series of pseudo-cyberpunk OAV's the artificials, called Buma as a root type (there are sub-divisions of some disparity) are, with a couple of exceptions, the archetypical Monster created by Man. Shelley's Frankenstein returns in the guise of the Genom corporation. The basic Buma is a tricky and ingenious creation. Largely undetectable as a machine, it will happily masquerade as a human being of Swazernegger-like proportions until unmasked by gunfire or required to complete its mission in a more powerful form. Then the lifelike skin tears away, revealing a blue-steel behemoth practically impervious to conventional weaponry and actually *larger* than its original form. Visions of Buma squeezing agonisingly into undersized skinsuits like an aging lounge lizard into tight jeans spring to mind, but these



biomechanoids are not to be taken lightly. Not only can they tear cars up and punch people into hamburger, they also carry a frightening arsenal of on-board beam weaponry, and can form a kind of symbiosis with other machines, merging into stolen weapon systems like the hero of David Cronenberg's *Videodrome*.

This type of Buma comes in a variety of colours, sizes, and capabilities, and most can disguise themselves as a human, or a human in a Hardsuit. Another type is more sinister still, and turns up from Part Two onwards. First shown as three tall, dangerous-looking women, these Buma do not transform, and come apart with much spurting of red fluids when dissembled by enough firepower. They are, however, extremely strong, agile, and resilient, plus the fact that they can operate underwater indefinitely without breathing equipment. They seem to have a degree of sadism built into their natures, and laser blades under their fingernails. Not nice.

Next on the list is the oddly-named Sexaroid Buma. Obviously artificial, these girls (two of whom, Anri and Sylvie, feature heavily in parts five and six) are cute, not especially strong or resistant to damage, and lifelike enough to win over even the Knight Sabers as friends. They have a dark secret, however. When wounded, they cannot repair themselves without large quantities of blood. Lacking their own, they tend to use that of other people, much to the owner's consternation. Frankenstein's monster is joined by Count Dracula, and a lovely couple they make.

While the original Buma are monstrous enough to cause few qualms about their degrees of life as they come apart at the hands of Priss and her buddies, the Sexaroid Bumas are definitely living, feeling girls. Sylvie's vampiric leanings stem purely from a desire to save her friend Anri, who later takes her own life to atone for Sylvie's. Although supreme villain Largo, who himself is a new 'species' of Superbuma, dismisses this act, and the girl's life, with the words "So she's dead. Or rather, It has ceased functioning," Priss' reaction, and our own, show the truth. We've just seen someone die, and it hurts, just as it always should.

Life. It's a big subject, possibly the biggest there is. Absolutely the most important. The story of Artificial Life is only just beginning to unfold. Unlike the eponymous Mobile Suit, artificial constructs display self-awareness, sentience, intelligence, and life, and are

almost certain steps on the long road of our own evolution. They may, as in *Bubblegum's* nightmare scenario, be our enemies. *Five Star Stories* tells us that they could be our friends. Probably, as in *Appleseed*, *Iczer-1*, *Dominion* and *Robot Carnival*, they will be something else, something more complex and alien and wonderful than we can as yet, hypothesize. At present rates of development, it will be decades, perhaps centuries before these amazing creations arrive in our world. It would be my loss if I am not alive to greet them when they do.

完



Illustration by Will Overton.

IT'S ALIVE!

27

In 1986, in need of a little light relief from his usual style, Masamune Shirow produced the manga *DOMINION*. Described by some as a parody of his own much darker work *APPLESEED*, also a manga hit, it spawned a fourpart OVA (Original Video Animation – i.e. made for and released straight on to videotape) series, a cyberpunk romp in which slapstick, parody and mass destruction are spiced with a sexual current provided by those lithe genetically-engineered arch-enemies of law and order, the Puma twins. Nothing, however, is wholly as it seems in *DOMINION*. True, there's mass destruction on a grand scale, but the physical violence is on the level of Tom and Jerry – Buaku lets off a huge gun in Britain's face and the Lieutenant gets up with a bad temper but not a scratch on his shades; a very large building collapses on a very small tank and its crew emerge unscathed; and a machine gun let off in a confined corridor at a whole squad of goons fails to do any damage whatsoever, even on ricochet. I've seen more serious violence in an episode of *GRANGE HILL*. The Puma twins are not just deathdealing fantasy dolls, despite their striptease in the glare of a score of police tank headlamps. The Syndicate may not have criminal intent. And, most obviously and most hilariously, if the Tank Police are all that stand between the city of Newport and chaos, the prognosis for law and order isn't good.

The story starts in 2010, when the world's pollution levels have escalated to the stage where toxic micro-bacteria make the air unbreathable and to survive outside for any length of time you need a filter mask. In the vast bio-constructed



# DOMINION





# ON

by Helen McCarthy





city of Newport, a crime is committed every 36 seconds. The Tank Police was set up to try and contain this rising tide. Unfortunately the force is by and large a refuge for the disturbed, the dysfunctional and the frankly psychotic, and its enthusiasm for its work and preference for overkill usually means that the forces of law and order do far more damage than the criminals they set out to control. (Their Chief is convinced he has the answer to the problem – give his men tactical nukes and the criminals wouldn't stand a chance. Nor, of course, would Newport, but you know what they say about omelettes.)

Into this scenario comes the newest Tank Police recruit, LEONA OZAKI, bright, brave and determined to do well. Lt. BRITAIN'S rampant machismo and her own tendency to rush headlong into trouble don't stop her from becoming a committed member of the force, and by the end of Acts I & II she and her "toy tank" Bonaparte, cobbled together from parts of Britain's own trashed tank, are all that stand between the forces of chaos and success.

Other major characters include Leona's pilot AL, who quickly develops a giantsized crush on her; SPECS (Megane in the Japanese version), Tank Police scientific genius; and THE CHAPLAIN (Shimpu in the original) – he and Al seem to be the only members of the squad approaching sanity. The opposition comes from BUAKU, a genetic construct with artificial eyes and a robot arm, and the rather more fetchingly engineered PUMA TWINS, Anna and Uni. The luckless MAYORESS of Newport has some comic moments as she tries in vain to limit the damage – and damages – without much help from the CHIEF OF POLICE.

The animation is very well handled, the city background paintings being striking examples of Shirow's style of design, and the comedy enhanced by the allusive distortion of face and movement common in anime. There are even moments of beauty – the squad banners rippling in the wind as Bonaparte makes a last stand against superior odds outside the blazing hospital are reminiscent of frames from a Kurosawa epic – and of such throwaway skill that you have to marvel at the animation team's mastery of their medium, like the sequence in which a Government chopper, lights dimming in the murk, skims above the pollution-clouded city, its instrument displays reflected in the pilot's faceplate.

There are more serious and meaningful stories in anime; there's some better, more detailed animation out there; but there's very little that so successfully combines girls, guns, tanks, environmental concerns and urban social decay, and still manages to be fun to watch. Whether in the original Japanese, the US MANGA CORPS subtitled version, or the MANGA VIDEO dub, DOMINION is sexy, funny, and very enjoyable.

## MANGA VIDEO'S DOMINION ENGLISH LANGUAGE DUB – THE REVIEW

A timecoded copy reached us the day before we went to press and HELEN MCCARTHY had time for one quick viewing before writing this, with the typesetters breathing down our necks... The copy I saw is of excellent quality, with beautifully sharp images and great colour doing justice to the murky, moody, organic backgrounds.





Unfortunately the sound mix was less sharp – background noises in some scenes, like street noise and the crackle of the fire as the hospital burns, seem to have been obscured in the mix. The voice acting is nicely done, with Peter Whitman's Chaplain standing out as warm and funny, delivering the mishmash of religious jargon into which his lines have been cast with style. Veteran British voice actor David Graham, who voiced Parker in THUNDERBIRDS, gives the Doctor his inimitable treatment in a crazed mid-European accent. (Shirow's choice of name for his own company – AGENT 21, a character in the 60s weekly which featured THUNDERBIRDS, TV21 – makes the casting of Graham an interesting coincidence.) The dub script doesn't change the original storyline, as is the wont of some US anime labels, but is in places a very loose rendering of the original Japanese. The overall effect seems to be an attempt to heighten the sense of violence, of which DOMINION has absolutely none. The point of this show is comedy, and the script certainly

serves up plenty of that. The language is easy and colloquial, it shouldn't date too rapidly and it moves the story along at a cracking pace. The only large cut is the removal of the end credits of Act I and opening credits of Act II, and the story moves seamlessly from one to the other, the pace keeping up. Nothing here to prevent DOMINION being a major hit. The music changes baffle me, given Island World's statement of why the score was rewritten. DOMINION had a pleasant but unremarkable music score, and it has been replaced by one almost equally undistinguished. This is house lift muzak; never mind making me want to get up and dance, it couldn't even raise a tap in my shoes. It's a lightweight sound, not much drive in the bass – maybe it'll sound meatier in a club on a big PA. Japanese opening title "Hot Dance On Cherry Moon" was no great contender in the lyric stakes, but the lyricist for the new opening song is obviously moonlighting from a job writing text for postage stamps. Island World are convinced that young people will love

the new score; I won't argue with their research but it didn't have any effect on me. On one viewing it's hard to be sure but I thought I detected a few fragments of the old score here and there, as in the grenade golf scene. The only change in the whole MANGA VIDEO release that I really object to is the shrinking of the Japanese end credit sequence to postcard size. It had to be done to accommodate the English dub credits, but those of you lucky enough to have an NTSC machine and the US MANGA CORPS version will be treated to two tantalising minutes of the Puma twins skinnydipping in a blue lagoon, while those of you with the MANGA VIDEO version may just go blind trying to make out the details. My verdict on the British dubbed release? Much closer to the Japanese original than the MANGA VIDEO's earlier FIST OF THE NORTH STAR, nicely voiced, very funny and likely to succeed. I'm now really looking forward to their version of PROJECT A-KO.

完

### DOMINION PRODUCTION CREDITS

#### ORIGINAL STORY

Screenplay, storyboard, & directed by  
Chara Design & director of animation  
Art Director  
Producers

Mecha designer  
Opening animation

©1988 Masamune Shirow/Hakusensha Agent 21/Toshiba Video Softwares Inc.  
Released 1991 by U.S. Manga Corps, 1992 by Island World Communications.

Act I translation: U.S. Renditions  
Act II translation: Neil Nadelman

Executive Producers of English Language Versions: John O'Donnell,  
Laurence Guinness.

Music for English language dubbed version: Brown Eyes for B Music Corporation.

#### DOMINION ENGLISH LANGUAGE DUBBING CAST

English version  
chara name  
LEONA OZAKI

AL

LT. BRITAIN

Chief of Police

Specs

Chaplain

Doctor

Mohican

Buaku

Annapuma and Unipuma

Mayoress

Japanese  
chara name

same

same

Squad Leader Brenten

same

Megane

Shimpu

same

same

same

same

Mayor

Actor

Toni Barry

Stephen Graf

Sean Barrett

Jesse Vogel

Bill Armstrong

Peter Whitman

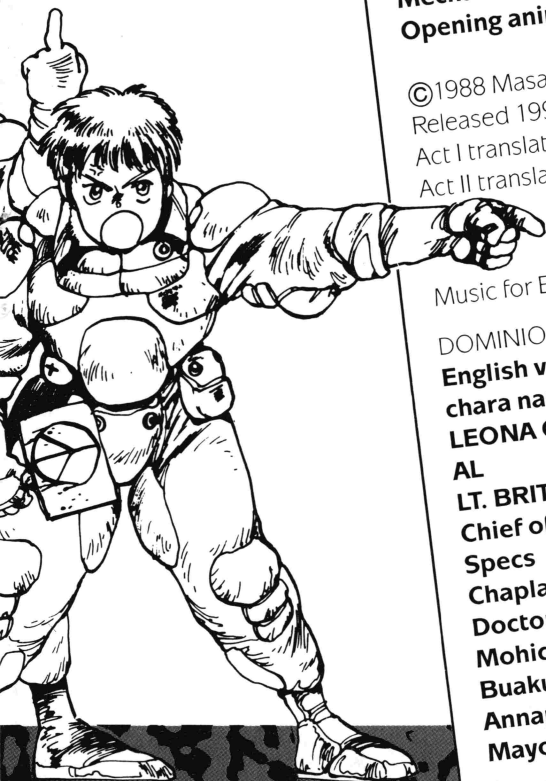
David Graham

John Bull

Marc Smith

Alison Dowling

Kate Harper



In its original comic-book incarnation, *Black Magic* was defined as manga creator Masumune Shirow's "seminal first work," quoted on the cover of the four-issue 1990 English language translation produced by Eclipse Comics. Most Anime fans will probably have seen or heard of *Black Magic*, and Shirow's other major works; *Appleseed*, a massive cyberpunk police epic, as yet unfinished and spanning four volumes, and the ecological tanks n' cops tale *Dominion*. Shirow's artwork is at once gritty and organic, even when describing the most inorganic of machines and mecha, and in many ways the *Black Magic* manga is a showcase for his art and writing styles, illustrating his penchant for complex interwoven conspiracy plots, strong female characters, and impressive mechanical devices.

Although the Original Animation Video shares a common link with the manga, anyone reading the comic and then watching the anime (or vice-versa) might be misled into thinking they've got the wrong thing. But the joining tissue is there, in plot threads and "atmosphere." Style is a very large part of these two "sisters," both born from the same germ of an idea, both taking the same story on

breaking a sweat, we are introduced to the workers at the Onimal restaurant, the owner of which happens to be custodian of a magic sword that is somehow part of Typhon's destiny. Then the story breaks for chapter one – "Bowman"; in which a secret battle submarine is stolen from the terraforming camp on Earth, and the subsequent launch of its ballistic missiles destroys an artificial sun, causing the Moon to stop rotating, the creation of the asteroid belt, and the beginning of the death of the dinosaurs! As things proceed, the reason why remains unclear and shrouded in conspiracy. Another prologue, another chapter – "Booby Trap." In this section of the story, the Typhon plotline is almost totally ignored, to concentrate on a straight action-adventure. A special forces team enters a city to hunt down and destroy four M66 humanoid robot soldiers, leading into some great punchups between an M66 and a large battle suit...The last M66's face off against the next model up – the four-armed M77, which destroys the renegades, but in the process goes rogue itself! The problem changes from four small ones to one large one! As the M77 busies itself

civilisation on Venus forever. Shirow manga fans will spot many ideas and items in *Black Magic* that would come to fruition in his later works on *Appleseed* and *Dominion*. It's also easy to see the potential of the second chapter as a stand-alone story, and indeed, this is exactly what happened...

## ANIME

To give it its full title, *Black Magic Mario M-66* took the concept behind the "Booby Trap" chapter of the manga and turned it into a full-blown Original Animation Video. Although the basic plot of "Killer Military Robot Goes Renegade" stayed the same, more characters and embellishments were added to book-end the story, and increase its depth. In the OAV, a pair of M-66 robots (F5 and F6) are accidentally activated when a military flyer crashes in the woods. Investigative TV reporter Sybel and her sidekick Leakey appear on the scene, hidden from the special forces squads that arrive to secure the area. As Sybel and Leakey spy on the squads setting up an ambush, F5 and F6 attack, brutally killing several soldiers before F5 is destroyed, and the more agile F6 escapes into the woodlands. The creator

# Black Magic

## MANGA into ANIME

by Jim Swallow

a different course.

## MANGA

To begin with the manga: Originally published in Japan several years ago by Seishinsha, the *Black Magic* manga was a single volume telling the story of events unfolding around Duna Typhon, a deceptively cute young lady who happens to be a sorceress with power equal to "five divisions of the Interplanetary Forces." Over the course of six chapters, readers were introduced to a thriving civilisation on Venus, millenia in the past, and its attempted colonisation of the then still-feral Earth. Although the "world" was portrayed as a futuristic utopian cityscape, magic and mysticism rubbed shoulders with cyborgs and starships. In the initial prologue, after Typhon proves herself by dispatching a team of warriors without

beheading cops and national guardsmen, the special forces team confine it to a single office block, and begin to move floor-by-floor to close in and destroy it. Tension mounts as the team are confronted by the robot, until it is finally shot through the head with a high-explosive armour-piercing round, point-blank. Tough to kill, yes indeed. Chapter three, "City Light," finds the Typhon plot returning with a vengeance, as a massive colony starship travels towards Saturn, only to be sabotaged. As the ship plummets towards the gas giant, the truth behind the conspiracy is revealed, and at the last second the "ramjet" engine sucks up gasses from Saturn, and uses them to propel it back to the moon Titan. In the final epilogue, Typhon drowns her sorrows at the Onimal's bar, and she reflects on the coming revolution that will destroy the

of the robots, Dr. Masshu, realises that F6's target-seeking program has been activated – and the target is his own grand-daughter Felice, mistakenly included as the test template! The confusion after the attack allows Sybel and Leakey to slip away, and Sybel goes on to the Masshu home while Leakey heads back to get the film they recorded on the midnight news. Sybel finds the house wrecked, and an answering machine message from Felice, giving the name of the restaurant where she is! It becomes a race against time as Sybel tries to protect Felice from the M-66. As they fight their way up the building with the special forces soldiers, F6 tackles them at every turn, until Sybel and Felice find themselves on the collapsing roof of the skyscraper as the murderous robot closes in. Sybel saves the day by blowing F6 off the building, and after she is



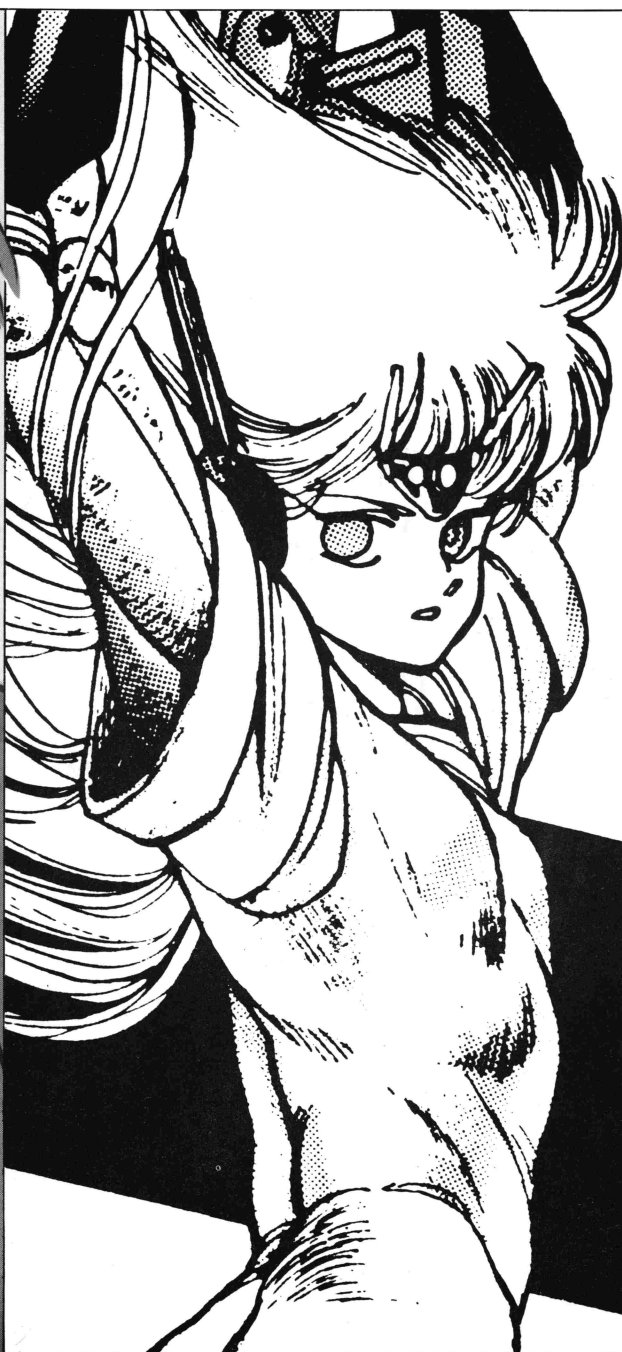
arrested by the military, Felice returns the favour by arguing for her release. The story ends with Sybel watching Leakey trying to pass off her footage as his own – with embarrassing results.

There's a lot of difference obvious just from this outline, but there's also a lot of subtler alterations – to begin with, the M-66 robot itself is more of a killing machine than it was in the manga, equipped in the anime with detachable arm-bombs, explosive darts, and a laser eye that can slash through concrete and steel. It's interesting to note too that the four-armed M77 never appears...due perhaps to the greater difficulty in

animating six limbs instead of four. Dr. Masshu, merely a nameless plot device in the manga, is given a character and some more motivation beyond "look how great my robot is at killing people"!, and even though he does lapse occasionally, he has a more human side which is shown in his feverish worrying for Felice's safety. The "hero" element is perhaps the most radical change, with the single-minded Sybel replacing the comic's less well defined characters, and doing it with gusto and determination – another example of a typical Shirow strong female. The "world" the story is presented in is also altered...there's nothing to show any connection to the

Typhon plot of the comic, or even the magic-and-technology civilisation it used as its background – the setting is once again the generic Future Urban Metropolis. Despite the obvious parallels that can be drawn between this movie and films like *Terminator* and *Eve of Destruction*, *Black Magic Mario M-66* still stands alone as a good action yarn; a chase movie with all the best anime trimmings. (Incidentally, the *Mario* in the OAV's title is short for *Marionette* – a reference to the "puppet" robot soldier). In either form, *Black Magic* is an enjoyable yarn, and well worth a viewing, if only to make your own comparisons.

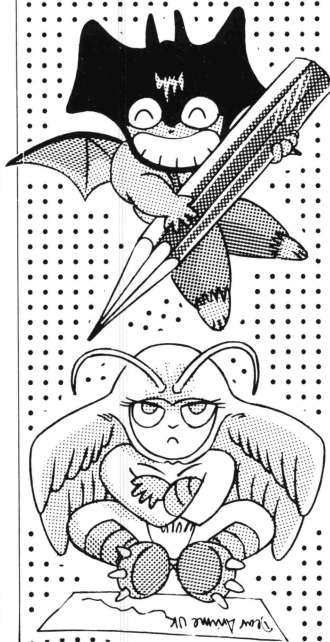
完



ANIME ▲

Anime and Manga versions of the F6 from Mario M66 and its Black Magic counterpart.

▲ MANGA



Dear Helen  
Konichiwa!

I'd been looking forward to the second issue of AUK Magazine for a long time... and I'm very pleased to say that it was well worth the wait! 'Dirty Pair' and 'Bubblegum Crisis' all in the same publication – my idea of heaven!! (No, I'm not really one of the "cute girls with big guns kick ass" fraternity. I quite like tentacles, too.) All you have to do now is keep up the momentum...

'Bubblegum Crisis' – seventh heaven! But the piece contains some statements (well, quite a lot actually) that I consider to be curious errors and extrapolations for which I've not seen any evidence – and also some odd omissions. Indeed, any extrapolations outside what is clearly contained in the OAV's seems of dubious validity, at least to me – unless the author has managed to obtain some input from the series' creators, at Animecon last year for example. (An "aside": isn't the enthusiasm of fandom for creating this sort of debate (and I seriously mean this as a friendly debate, not as an assassination of the article's writer) fascinating? If one were to sit back and be rational about this, speculating about the backgrounds of fictional characters who exist only as drawings on film is REAL silly! But who cares!!)

Is the almost total destruction of Tokyo only seven years before the story opens actually mentioned anywhere, for example? I also disagree about the origin and use of the bumaz; I get the clear impression in the established storyline that bumaz, like the "labors" in 'Patlabor', are well-established

throughout society in all sorts of menial and/or dangerous jobs, and that Genom's secrecy is in respect of its developing military bumaz. The AD Police were initially a "super-SWAT" unit, and have inherited the anti-bumaz role because they're the only ones even partially equipped for the job – see the (so far) 3-issue 'AD Police' series (starring, of course, a young Leon McNichol).

Insofar as the view of the characters goes, I see no particular reason to assume that Priss and Linna are orphans, or that Linna is a dancer by career; the translations I've seen all refer to her as an aerobics instructor (see also 'Scoop Chase', where she offers to give Nene special coaching in her class). In Bubblegum Crash, of course, Linna is working for a firm of stock-market dealers. The major omission here is that Linna is the most mercenary of the team; in 'Revenge Road' she is the one who laments that they have no current job which would enable her to buy a new car and wardrobe! The most obvious error, though, is the statement that Leon McNichol does not know Priss' secret identity. In 'Moonlight Rambler' Leon is present (trapped in his disabled battle-armor) when Priss removes her helmet to comfort the dying Sylvie, and in 'Red Eyes' the scene is replayed from his viewpoint – which shows clearly that he saw (and heard) her. During the story he obliquely lets her know that he knows, and they seem to settle for a friendly camaraderie. The team's secret identities are, in fact, not-so-secret at all. Both Mason and Rurago of Genom know that Sylvia is the team leader ('Blow Up' and 'Moonlight Rambler'), and could presumably easily work out/discover the others – although Mason dies at the end of 'Blow Up'. Nene's secret is known by the niece of the Chief of Police, who is a budding photo-journalist (but like all "friendly" journalists will not divulge the information). Linna revealed herself to the American pop singer Vision ('Double Vision').

Again please accept that the preceding piece on BGC was written with the best of intentions. I've no time for fan "factionism"; at worst your reporter and I can agree amicably to disagree, while it may happen that one of us will come over to the other's viewpoint (or, more likely, we'll meet somewhere in the middle!) I wonder, in fact, if the article was written without the benefit of having seen all eight episodes, particularly in view of the reporting of

the Priss/Leon situation. And finally ("Thank God", I hear you say!) to my special plaudits to Messrs. Goll and Overton, not only for the very friendly response that I received when I phoned Sigma Publications to ask a couple of questions, but also for the magnificent job that they (and their team) have done in producing the magazine – which can proudly take its place with the very best available. I'm about to send them a cheque for the third issue, and look forward to being able to take out a subscription soon...  
Sayonara  
Martin D. Pay  
Chelmsford  
Essex

*EDITOR: Dear Martin  
I'm glad you enjoyed ANIME UK MAGAZINE 2. As you say, keeping up the momentum is a challenge, but we're having great fun and hope to be able to carry on improving with every issue. On the subject of our BUBBLEGUM CRISIS article, I think maybe what the article is trying to do was unclear to you. It isn't an attempt to provide all the information about BUBBLEGUM CRISIS in existence, it's an introductory article. It sets out the background at the beginning of the series – it doesn't take into account later story progression, which is outlined in Roger Duarte's synopsis in this issue. Therefore, to use your examples of identities being revealed, although Leon does find out that Priss is a member of the Knight Sabers in the course of the series, and Mason learns the same about Celia, neither knows this when the series commences. The "secret identities" remain secret until quite a bit later in the series.*

*I do take your point about Buma, though; Japanese sources are quite explicit that bumaz were developed by GENOM for their own evil purposes, but this doesn't exclude the established and peaceable use of Buma technology in BGC, as I didn't point out and you do. However, I don't know if the AD Police storyline can be used as background for the Force's role as defined in the beginning of BGC, as I think the AD Police series post-dates BGC – in terms of writing and production, that is, not of story. I don't know whether or not the series is internally consistent with BGC or whether it makes changes to the shared background of both series. In any event, it doesn't alter the situation at the beginning of BGC – because it wasn't written then!  
The character background information is taken from translated Japanese*



magazines, books and other sources, and I personally think these are as valid as the internal information in the series. This is my source that Linna and Priss are orphans, and that Linna is a dancer who wants to be an allround performer. Remember that a great many dancers also teach dance or physical fitness as a "fill-in". Celia certainly approaches Linna after a failed audition in the series. I must defend Linna, too – I don't think it's really fair to describe her as "mercenary" on the basis of one comment! All the girls display a healthy interest in material things – they're normal women, not warrior nuns. I also took from translated Japanese sources the information about the great Kanto earthquake of 2025 and the near-destruction of Tokyo. It's very difficult to be sure that we are seeing an exact translation of the sense of the script in every respect when we see subtitled Anime – so I try to build up an overall picture from books, trailers, magazine articles and other supporting background material, to fill in any gaps in my understanding. You'll see an example of this in the PROJECT A-KO article in this issue, where I quote the girls' vital statistics – taken from an A-KO book given away with a popular Anime magazine. Of course, there's always the "input from the series' creators", and we're hoping to get more of that!

# WE NEED YOU

Amazing as it may seem, producing a magazine is not as easy as a lot of people might think. A lot of time and effort goes into each issue, and so we're asking for a little help. If you think that you're something of an expert on a particular aspect of anime, perhaps, a certain show (and it doesn't have to be a new series, there must be someone out there who's the world's leading Yamato expert!) or maybe you make a lot of soft vinyl figure kits, and you think you can write an informative article on it that others might find interesting, then get writing! But remember, we're not looking for just story synopses, we need some sort of background material as well. Maybe the directors previous credits or a little info on the shows origins.

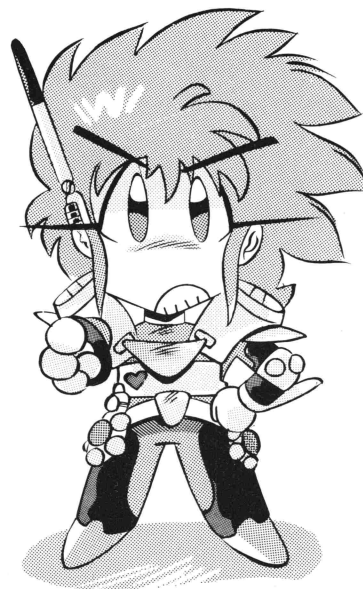
We also want your artwork! Even if you just scribble for fun you can still get on the Eyecatch page, the only thing we ask for here is that you draw something original and don't just copy a picture out of Newtype. All artwork should really be in black & white as well.

Don't forget, the only way we know if you like the magazine is if you tell us! So get in touch. We'll always try to answer any questions you might have about anime but we can only do it if you write to us at:

Anime UK Magazine  
c/o Helen McCarthy  
147 Francis Road  
Leyton  
London  
E10 6NT  
England.



Please enclose an SSAE!



NOW AVAILABLE

U.S.A. – U.K. VHS VIDEO CONVERSIONS

FOR THE MOST COMPETITIVE RATES

TEL: RON BRISCOE 0704 65490  
(24hr ANSWERING SERVICE)

## conTanimeT·92

**2~4th  
October 1992**

**New Cobden  
Hotel  
Birmingham**

For details contact:

**Denzil Brown  
20 Field Ridge  
Shaw  
Newbury  
BERKS**





We stock a wide range of  
Anime & Manga goods -  
**BOOKS · MAGAZINES**  
**· MODEL KITS · CELS**  
**· VIDEOS · T-SHIRTS ·**  
**PINS · PATCHES · POSTERS**  
and more !!

Our shop is open 10am-5pm, Sat: 9am-5pm but we  
are closed all day Wednesday. We have tables at  
Leeds comic mart, the larger Star Trek conventions  
and the UKCAC comic convention. We can bring  
items along to these events if you give us a ring.  
Fax No. 0742 758905  
We now take ACCESS, VISA and STYLE cards.

**SF BOOKS**

**COMICS**

**FILM/TV**

**33 THE WICKER**  
**SHEFFIELD S3 8HS**  
**TEL: (0742) 758905**





Illustrations by Wii Overton.

**ADVANCE TO NEXT ISSUE**

# SILENT MÖBIUS

Having trouble with the supernatural?  
Forget the Ghostbusters, you need the  
Attacked Mystification Police Department.

## ANIME EXPO '92

For those who couldn't make it, this is what you missed.

**AND LOTS MORE!**

**ANIME UK MAGAZINE  
ISSUE 4**

**ON SALE OCTOBER 8th**



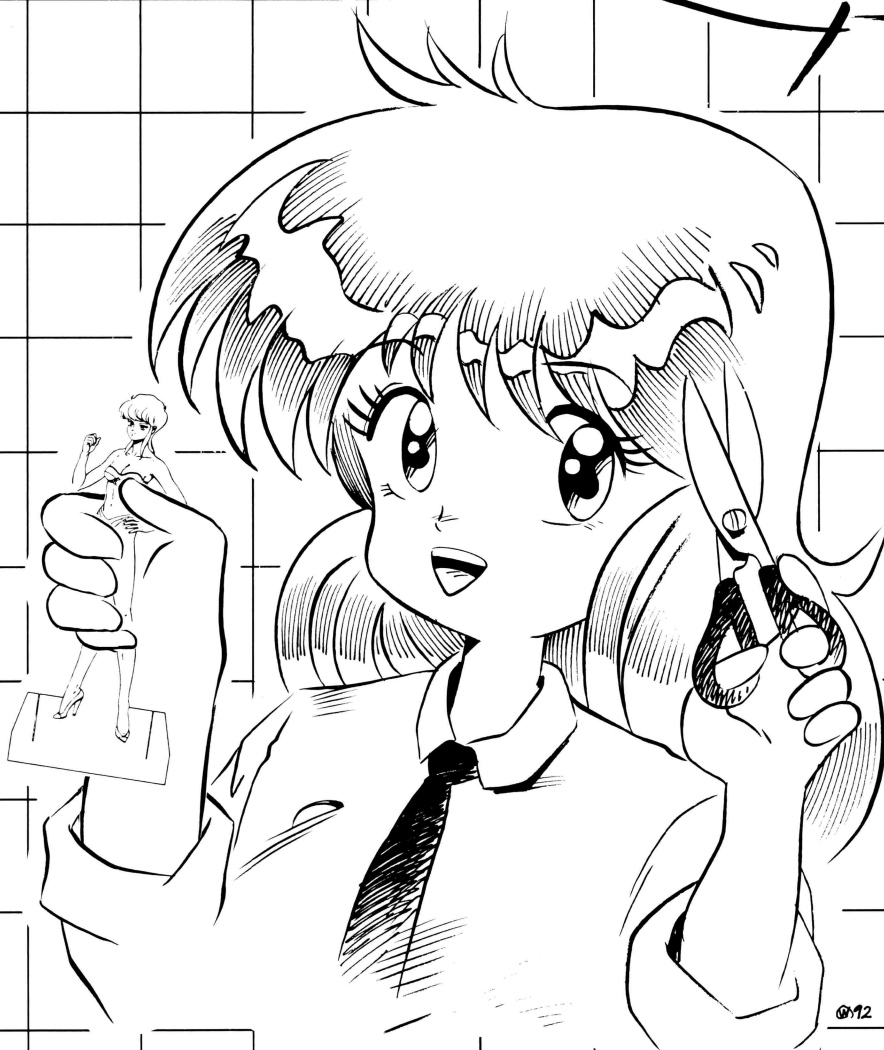




STEVE KYTE '92



GO GO  
HARDSUITS!



# **BUBBLEGUM CRISIS**

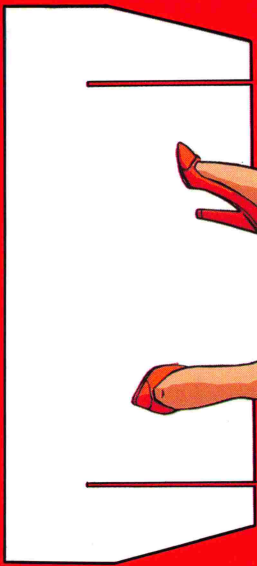
## **KNIGHT SABERS *DRESS UP!***

Original idea by Sue Shadbolt

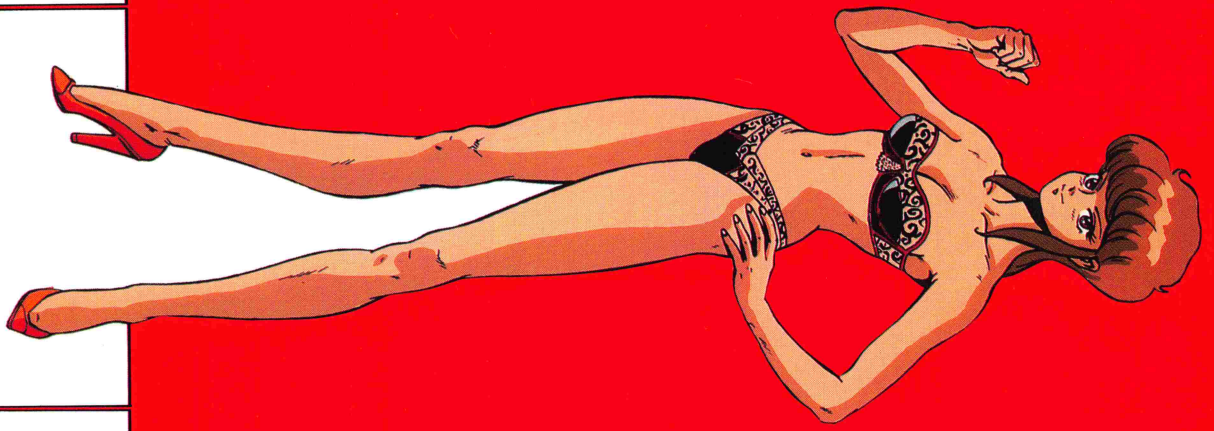
Illustrated by STEVE KYTE

Harmony work by WIL OVERTON

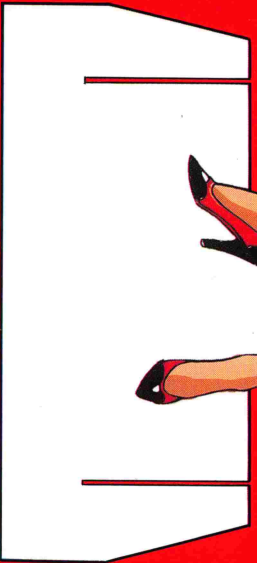
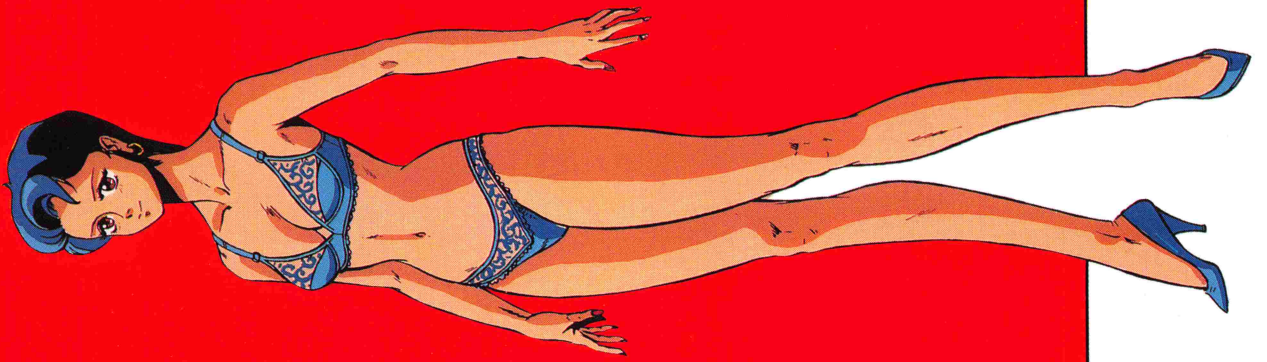
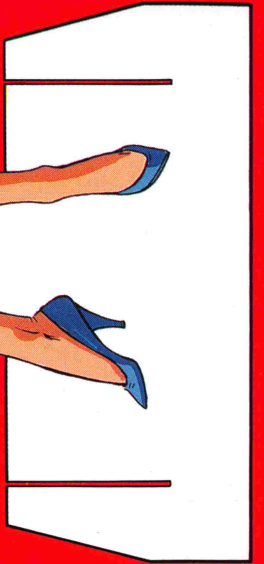
Underwear Consultant Peter Goll



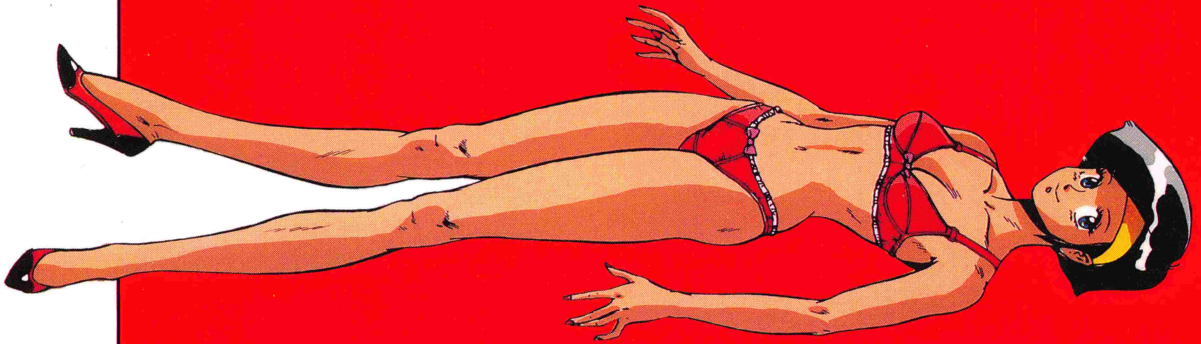
PRISS



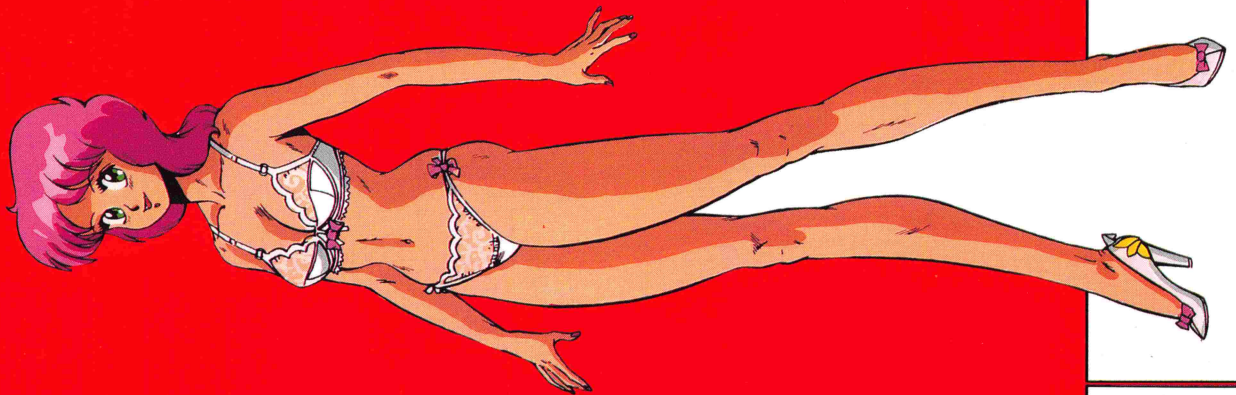
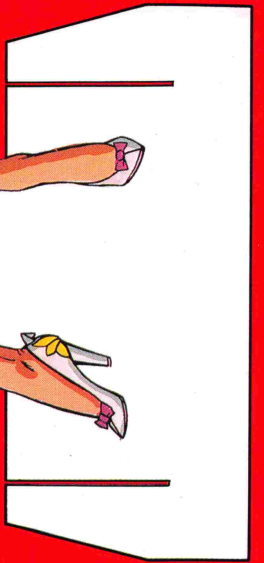
CELIA



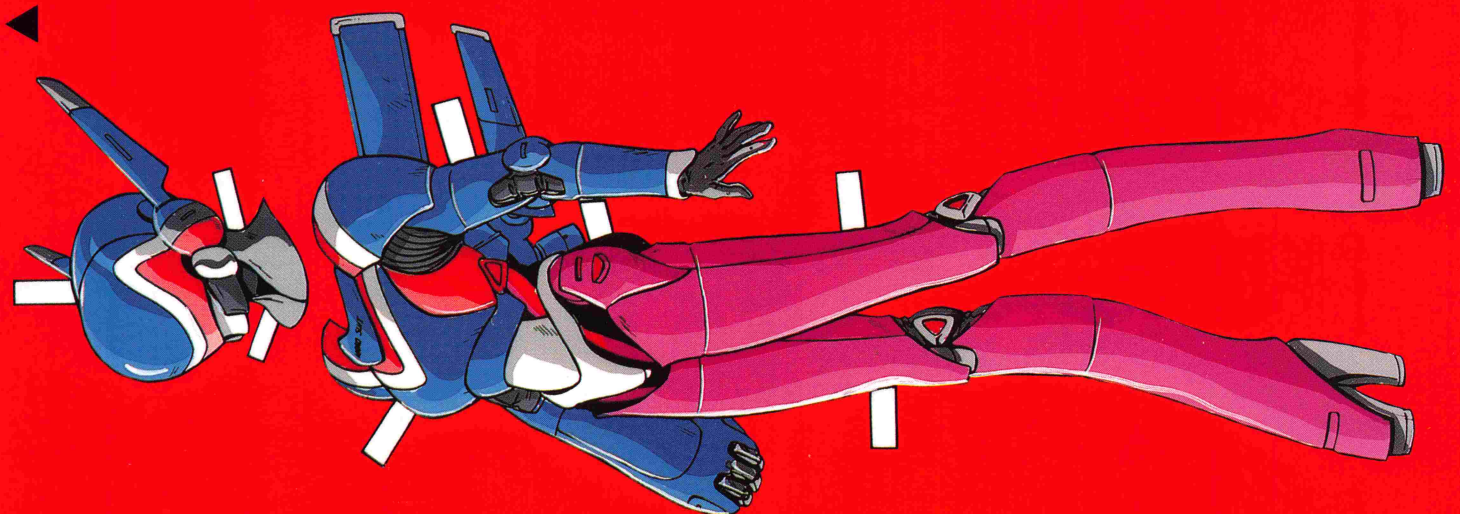
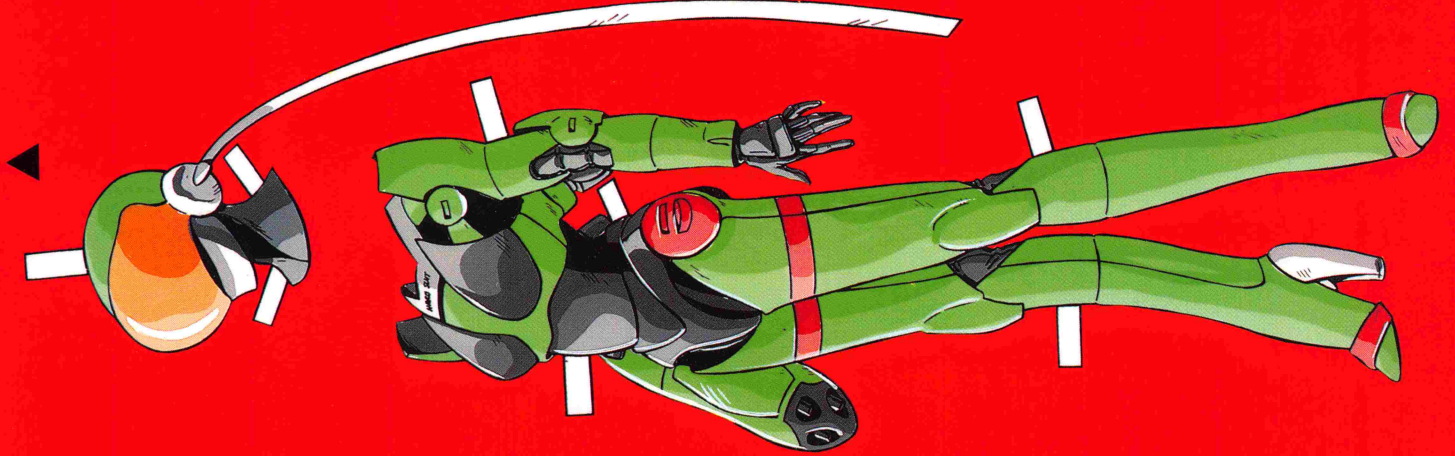
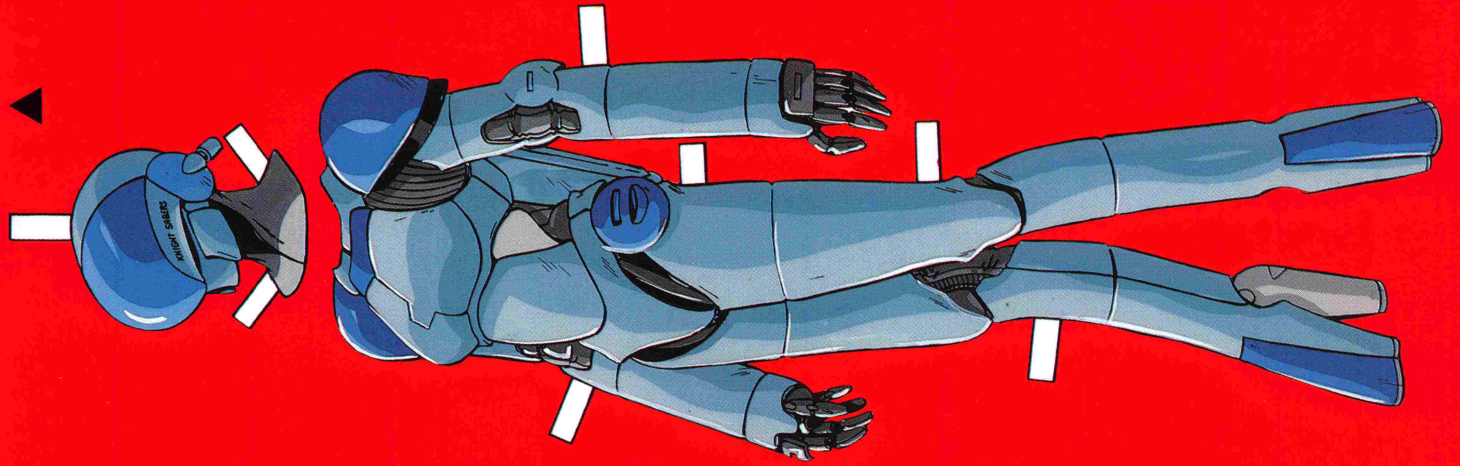
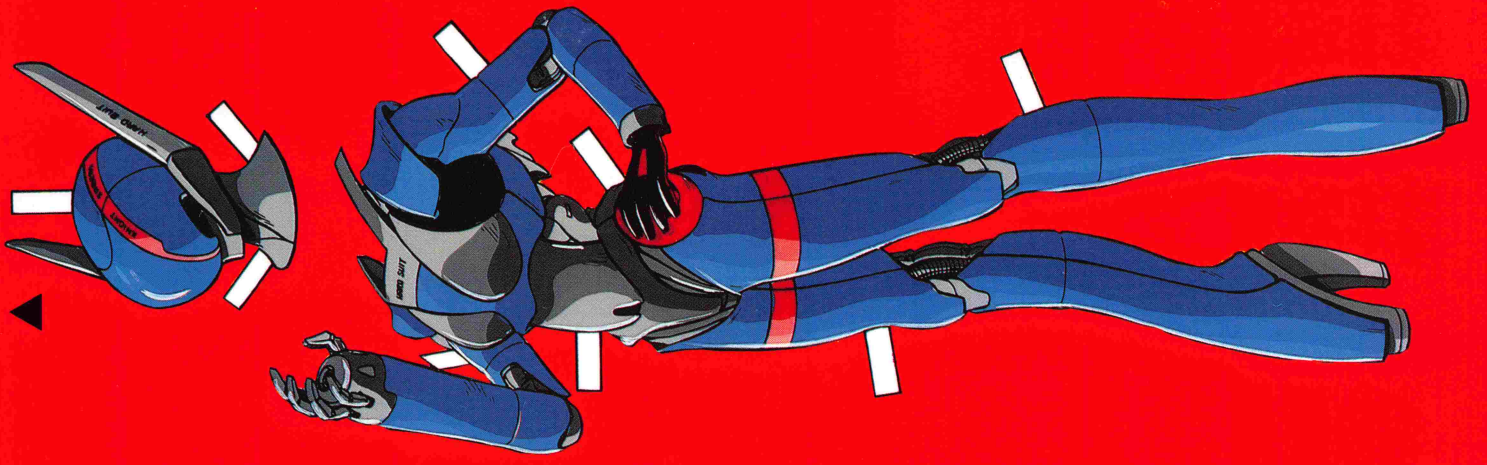
LINNA



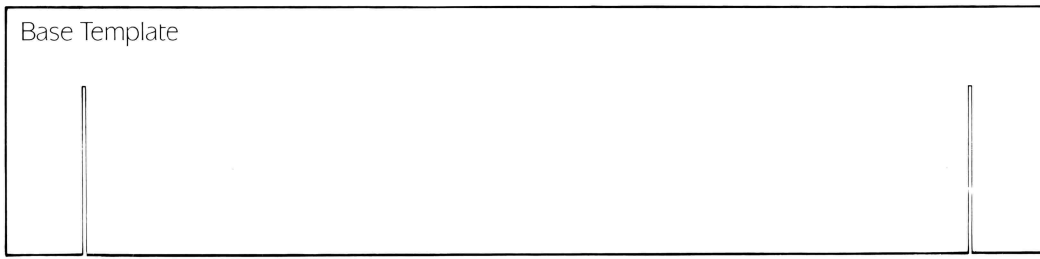
NENE



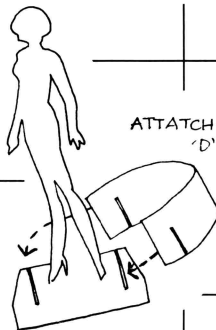




Base Template



- ① CUT OUT YOUR DOLLS CAREFULLY - THE CARD BETWEEN THEIR LEGS HELPS TO STRENGTHEN THE STAND AND SHOULDN'T BE CUT AWAY, BUT YOU SHOULD CUT AWAY THE CARD BETWEEN THEIR ARMS AND BODIES.
- ② MAKE 4 STAND STRIPS FROM CARD USING THE TEMPLATE ABOVE. YOU CAN MAKE THE DOLLS STIFFER BY PUTTING THEM ONTO THICKER CARD.
- ③ CUT THE COSTUMES OUT CAREFULLY, LEAVING THE TABS ON.
- ④ FOLD THE TABS BACK OVER THE DOLLS TO HOLD THE COSTUMES IN PLACE.
- ⑤ WHEN PUTTING ON THE COSTUMES, PUT THE HARDSUITS OVER THE HELMET NECK EXTENSIONS.
- ⑥ YOU CAN TRACE AROUND THE DOLLS AND MAKE MORE OUTFITS FOR THEM, EITHER COPIED FROM THE OAV'S OR TO YOUR OWN DESIGNS.
- ⑦ DON'T FORGET TO ENTER THE BUBBLEGUM CRISIS BEST DRESS COMPETITION !



ATTATCH STAND TO MAKE A 'D' SHAPED BASE.